EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE
Department of Political and Social Sciences

Modernity and its varieties. A historical sociological analysis of the Romanian modern experience

By

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Thesis submitted for assessment with
A view to obtaining the degree of Doctor of the
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Preface

This study has a dual objective. On the one hand, it seeks to contribute to a more complex of understanding of modernisation and social change. In this respect, my case-study of the Romanian experience with modernity might be of interest to scholars working in other fields, as the particularities of the Romanian case could have relevance for other 'later modernising countries', i.e. those countries that did not take part in the emergence of Western modernity. On the other hand, the study attempts to contribute to a fuller understanding of the Romanian history of modernisation, in that it seeks to provide theoretically informed interpretations of its pattern of modernisation. It is claimed that particular experiences that are usually understood as non-modern should be interpreted as contributing to the overall modern experience in Romania.[1]

It should be noted that only in a more advanced stage of my research I was able to consult sources in the Romanian language, as I started out without any knowledge of Romanian. This also means that in some instances I have relied on translated sources.

Thanks are due to many persons for their advice and help in the writing of this thesis. I will be able to list only a few. My supervisor, Peter Wagner, has provided me with many insights on questions of modernity and modernisation. At the University of Amsterdam, I thank Otto Holman and Kees van der Pijl for their support in the early stages of my research (I am afraid I drifted rather far away from my original 'moorings'). In (and outside) Romania many people helped me in invaluable ways, in particular: Cristian Mureşeanu, Adina Stefan, Liana Stefan, Isabela Corduneanu, Larisa Dragomir, Floarea Virban, and Florin Bilbiie. Further, I thank Dorel Şandor at the Center for Political Studies and Comparative Analysis, and the collaborators of the Institute of Sociology, the Institute of the Quality of Life, the Library of the Group for

[1] I have published a number of publications based on work done for the thesis in an earlier stage: 'Economic reform in Romania: continuity in change', in: A.E. Fernández-Jilberto and M. Riethof (eds), *Labour Relations in Development*, London: Routledge, 2002; 'Romania's first experience with modernity: the liberal attempt and its adversaries', in: K. Treptow (ed.), *Romania: a crossroads of Europe*, Iasi: The Center for Romanian Studies, pp. 95-122, 2002; and 'Romanian liberalism and its discontents', Working Paper, SPS 2003/02, Florence: European University Institute, 2003.

Social Dialogue, and the New Europe College, all in Bucharest. I would further like to thank Maarten Keune, Sean Chabot, Patricia Chiantera-Stutte, Prof. Arfon Rees, Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, Margaret Mantl, the organisers and participants of the Summer School on Multiple Modernities at the ASSR, Amsterdam, 2001, and Umut Korkut for useful comments and interesting discussions. Finally, I thank my father, Jan Blokker, for his research 'contributions', and my wife, Elena Maddalena, for her unlimited support.

Introduction

After the experiment of communism, the 'return to normalcy' of the countries in Eastern Europe[2] was widely regarded as a confirmation of the failed nature of communism as an alternative to Western modernity. By the same token, it was also understood as a verification of the uniqueness and exclusivity of the Western modern experience. During the 1990s, both these assumptions strongly informed the debate on the 'transitions' or, better, the 'transformations' of the formerly communist countries. In this debate, the understanding of Western modernity as the only viable configuration of modernity has been a predominant assumption, while theoretical approaches often presupposed the normative desirability of the convergence of East with West, translated in more practical terms as the 'transfer of institutions'. As such, the debate on transformation often seemed to uncritically draw on insights of classical modernisation theory. In the latter, as in the former, modernisation has predominantly been understood as the convergence of non-modern or not-yet-modern societies towards the self-proclaimed modern Western model. On an institutional level, this model is archetypally portrayed as consisting of a democratic political system, a market economy, and the nation-state. From this perspective, the process of modernisation becomes a uni-linear transition from the non-modern or traditional to the modern, a process in which non-rational traditions, arbitrary despotic rule, and homogeneity gradually make place for instrumental rationality, a procedural-legal basis for modern institutions, and a continuous social and institutional differentiation.

By postulating convergence and (implicitly) adopting many tenets of classical modernisation theory, the greater part of intellectual activity has been oblivious to the supposition of possible diversity in the recently redirected process of becoming modern in Eastern Europe. Only recently have some approaches (path dependency, neo-classical sociology) taken diversity as their point of departure and, as a consequence, become more sensitive to history. In doing so, they seem to have heralded 'the end of the transition paradigm' altogether (Bönker *et al.* 2002; Carothers 2002), although some

residual aspects of the convergence thesis and modernisation as Westernisation seem to have persisted (see chapter 2).

In this study, I concur with these critical approaches towards the contemporary projects of modernisation in Eastern Europe, but I will also depart more radically from the 'transition paradigm'. An effective point of departure for studying and analysing the current transformations in Eastern Europe can be found in the wider sociological debate on 'varieties of modernity' or 'multiple modernities'. Although this debate has not (as yet) resulted in the clear crystallisation of a theoretical approach (cf. Arnason 2000a), its radical departure from classical modernisation theory and its key assumption of diversity in the experience of modernity offer promising leads for a more critical analysis of contemporary modernisation. An approach of 'varieties of modernity' not only offers the perspective of different pathways to modernity (as already proposed in the 1960s by critical exponents of modernisation theory, such as Barrington Moore and Bendix), but also a more critical and complex understanding of modernity itself. As one contributor puts it: ' [T]he view of modernity as a uniform, unambiguously structured and self-contained pattern in progress towards full realization and harmonious integration is contested' (Arnason n.d.). Such an approach seeks a radical move away from uni-linear and teleological understandings of history, singular understandings of modernity, and allows for the identification of distinct and alternative versions of modernity, such as the communist-Soviet types and the fascist/national-socialist type (cf. Arnason 1993; Eisenstadt 2000; Wittrock 2000).

My own analysis will not attempt to fully incorporate the extensive agenda set by some contributors to the debate (see, for instance, Eisenstadt's formulation of a civilisational approach). I will rather select some of the insights of 'varieties of modernity' in order to construct an alternative approach to the transformations in Eastern Europe. The most valuable perceptive shift is from a structural and evolutionary understanding of social change to a focus on major social actors and the conceptions and 'ontological "visions" that inform the activities of these élites and that are derived from the major cultural orientations or codes prevalent in a society' (Eisenstadt 1992: 413). The attitude of

[2] I prefer to use the designation Eastern Europe rather than the more awkward Central and Eastern Europe; the term will be used throughout the whole study.

human agents towards the social order is thus fundamentally one of reflexivity, meaning that the social order is not taken for granted. A second insight moves away from the understanding of modern society as a unified and integrated whole and underlines instead its conflictual nature. To understand modernisation one must understand the major conflicts between social actors over the construction of modern society. The proposition of diversity that derives from these assumptions forms the starting point for my case-study of Romanian modernisation.

The key assumption in this study is that the transformations in Eastern Europe and modernisation in general should not be taken as predetermined processes working towards an already identified modern end-state (consisting of an archetypal understanding of the Western democratic market economy), but rather that modernisation (and therefore also contemporary transformation) can best be understood as a variety of modernising political projects, implemented by modernising agents in specific temporal-spatial contexts (cf. Eisenstadt 1992).

At least three general hypotheses can be derived from such an assumption, which will inform my general approach towards modernisation:

1. Modernisation cannot be equated with Westernisation nor with convergence towards an end-state of modern society as embodied by Western societies.

2. Modernisation is not a *process* or bundling of processes (industrialisation, individualisation, rationalisation, urbanisation) which lead to an ultimately integrated and unified modern society, but consists of successive political *projects* pursued by modernising agents who seek to reconstruct society on the basis of their specific understanding of modernity. This also means that *conflict* over the understanding of modernity is an immanent factor of modernisation and that institutionalised projects of modernisation are always open to critique.

3. With regard to modernisation in Eastern Europe (perhaps also relevant to other 'later modernising' societies), modernisation projects are for a significant part constructed under the influence of external ideas and models. This observation does not,

however, entail that modernisation in these societies is necessarily expressed in the indiscriminate emulation of external models, but rather that modernisation takes the form of a selection of elements from external models in an encounter with local (traditional) components.

In this study, specifically concerning 'later modernising societies', modernisation is defined as: *a political project initiated by political élites, aiming at the reconstruction of the social order on the basis of the idea of human autonomy.* Modernisation occurs when domestic actors, often under the influence of foreign models and ideas, attempt to reconstruct the existing political and social order on the basis of the conception that society is in principle malleable and that its structures should be the result of human self-determination, rather than transcendental principles (such as religion) or subordination to larger entities (empires). Such a definition of modernisation leads to a number of insights that move away from classical modernisation theory as well as current-day 'transitology'. Firstly, an understanding of history as ultimately open-ended and contingent will be substituted for a strong teleological reading of history (as apparent in the understanding of modernisation as moving from the traditional to the modern, from particularism to universalism, from substantive to formal rationality). Nevertheless, my assumption is that history is not completely open, but partly 'patterned', as modernising agents draw on previously formed interpretations of modern society as well as react against earlier understandings and their institutional sedimentations. What matters in the analysis of modernisation in a given society is not only the identification of continuities and discontinuities, but also the specific origins of the experience of modernity (this refers in particular to state-formation and nation-building in the nineteenth century). In addition, as indicated above, a historical analysis of modernisation in Eastern Europe cannot be completed without analysing the encounters with extraneous models and ideas, which in themselves constitute a further structural element in projects of modernisation. Secondly, modernising agents cannot be reduced to 'functional' and 'dynamic' 'change agents' related to Westernising projects (archetypally associated with the bourgeoisie, or substitutive collective agents such as the managerial class). Modernising agency can take varied forms and it is rather in the identification of particular constellations of actors and conflicts between significant

actors that the nature of modernisation can be understood. Thirdly, in close relation to the latter remark, the conceptions and meaning-givings of modernisation by these various actors should be the starting-point for any analysis of modernisation. This is so because it is by gaining insights into the understandings of modernisation in particular societies that we can start to understand the particular patterns or pathways taken in different contexts.

In order to give my approach historical-empirical substance, I apply this conception of modernisation as a subject-driven, locally embedded as well as externally induced project to a single - relatively under-researched – case of an Eastern European country: Romania (see below for a description of the particularly interesting and relevant components of the Romanian case). In order to study the dynamics, sequence and emerging pattern in Romania's experience with modernity, I use a historical-sociological approach with an emphasis on the conceptual analysis of modernising discourses. The political-institutional part of this historical-sociological analysis is concerned with the identification of major modernising agents (political élites and intellectuals), their nature and self-positioning towards modernisation, and the institutional patterns (political-legal institutions and socio-economic structures) created by these modernisers. The analysis of agency and institutions is 'embedded' in an attempt to reconstruct understandings of modernisation held by modernising agents. Rather than following a fully elaborated discourse analysis or a comprehensive history of ideas, I attempt to define various discourses of modernisation by means of a limited number of categories of key concepts (see chapter 3). In order to differentiate between the normative (values, principled beliefs, and identities) and the cognitive aspects of ideas, I propose a distinction between two levels within discourses: a politico-philosophical level, which concerns the normative premises of modernisation, and an institutional-strategic level, which entails cognitive prescriptions for identifying the means to the ends of modernisation. It is important to note that cognitive prescriptions are derived from the normative level, but the latter is not reducible to the former. In other words, various cognitive expressions of the normative are possible. In this way, I seek to 'capture' the hierarchy of values and priorities in discourses of modernisation. In addition, a conceptual approach enables me to compare various projects of

modernisation in Romania diachronically, exposing continuities and discontinuities in understandings of modernity. At the same time, I will use this 'minimal' conceptual approach to compare Romanian discourses synchronically with what I call 'transnational discursive paradigms' (liberalism, fascism, communism, and neoliberalism) to highlight the specificity of the Romanian pattern of modernisation.

I should underline that I do not consider the Romanian experience as constituting an alternative, distinct modernity as such. I rather consider its variety or diversity the outcome of the encounter between (re-invented) Romanian culture and various alternative modernities. It is the specific Romanian pathway emerging from these encounters that has resulted in the specific Romanian interpretation, which should nevertheless be considered a 'variation on the theme' of Western modernity. Rather than understanding Romania's experience with modernity as 'failed modernisation', its diversity should be acknowledged.

Modernisation in Romania has often been understood in direct contradistinction to tradition. The two dominant currents of thought that reflect Romania's experience with modernity since the early 19th century have been named 'modernism'/'Europeanism' and 'traditionalism'/'indigenism' (cf. Hitchins 1994; Jowitt 1978; Ornea 1995; Verdery 1991). The first of these comprises those conceptions that are affirmative towards Western modernity, open to Europe and the West at large, and generally favour an emulation of Western ideas and practices. The second tradition includes those strands of thought that are sceptical towards Western modernity, emphasise Eastern traditions to the detriment of Western European ones, and generally favour a construction of society on the basis of local traditions and values and/or Eastern ones. While the conventional reading of Romanian history regards 19th century liberalism as the origin of Romanian modernisation, subsequent, more critical understandings of modernity (the most radical of these is interwar fascism) are predominantly measured against the Europeanist tradition and as such regarded as exclusively non- or anti-modern (cf. Ornea 1995). Although it is tempting to equate Europeanism and traditionalism with pro- and anti-modernism respectively, in my view both these strands constitute reactions to Western modernity. As such they constitute very different but not necessarily mutually exclusive conceptions of modernisation. If modernisation is not equated with emulating the West,

but rather understood as the desire of modernising agents to construct a modern society, modernisation can take various forms and apparent anti-modern movements and projects can be made more intelligible as both reactions and alternatives to one reading of modernity, that of Western individualist liberalism. Starting from this assumption, I identify at least four projects of modernisation in Romanian modern history, i.e., 19th century national Liberalism, interwar fascism, national communism as it emerged in the 1960s, and a contemporary project which is still in the process of crystallisation, but which is clearly only with difficulty identifiable as either pro- or anti-Western.

The organisation of the thesis is as follows. The study is divided into four parts. The first deals with theoretical approaches towards modernisation and transition in Eastern Europe, to end in an outline of my conceptually driven historical-sociological approach[3]. The second part consists of a historical case-study of three projects of modernisation in Romania. The third part contains a conceptual and comparative analysis of the discourses of modernisation that underpin various projects of modernisation. And finally, in the fourth part, the post-communist period is analysed in the light of historical (discursive) legacies.

Chapter 1 contains a general introduction to conceptualisations of modernisation and revisits classical modernisation theory and its problems. I focus on perceptions of history, agency, and the dichotomy of tradition-modern in classical modernisation theory. By giving due attention to more critical positions within modernisation theory (in particular of Reinhard Bendix and Barrington Moore) I begin to outline an alternative approach.

In chapter 2 the focus is on transition theory as it has been developed in the context of the transformations in Eastern Europe since 1989. In this chapter the main purpose is to underline the return of untenable presuppositions of classical modernisation theory in contemporary theorising. Again, by analysing the more critical approaches towards transformation (neo-classical sociology and path-dependency approaches), I try to further clarify my own position.

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[3] I thank one of the anonymous reviewers of my working paper based on a part of this study (Blokker 2003) for this formulation.

In chapter 3, I outline my own approach by elaborating on my understanding of history, agency, and understandings of modernisation. I develop my conceptual analysis of discourses of modernisation by constructing a conceptual map, which is based on divisions between the normative and cognitive levels of ideas, and in threefold distinctions between categories of ideas within these levels.

Part 2 consists of the case-study of Romania's experience with modernity. In chapter 4, the emergence of the first project with the intention to construct a modern society is analysed. Initiated predominantly by the Romanian Liberal movement, the national-Liberal project was above all an attempt by Romanian nationalists to rid their territories of foreign influence (both the Ottoman and the Russian empires having made claims on the territory of what is now Romania) and to establish a modern polity on the basis of Romania self-rule. National emancipation was the result of the combined efforts of 'progressive' Liberals and Conservatives, two partly antagonistic political movements who nevertheless shared a strong idea of national identity. The national Liberal project and its institutionalisation provoked criticism reproaching Liberalism for its emulationism. Chapter 5 deals with the continuation and emerging critique of the national Liberal project in the interwar period. Although Romania was politically and institutionally dominated throughout the period by the national-Liberal movement, whose attitude towards modernisation was increasingly one of conserving its achievements, the period also witnessed the rise of a potent counter-movement in the form of Fascism. Although this movement hardly knew a moment of political rule and institutionalisation (its ideology was anyhow of an 'under-institutionalised' nature), its impact on Romanian political and cultural life was immense. Chapter 6 confronts the national Communist project. Although I do not regard the first decade of Communism as a *Romanian* project of modernisation (it did not explicitly consist of a local project, but was part of the internationalist Soviet one). The Stalinist project of the 1950s did lay the foundation for the emergence of a fully national project of modernisation. The *sui generis* nature of this project was not merely the repeated invocation of national independence by Ceauşescu, but, perhaps more importantly, its ideological syncretism of Marxism-Leninism and radical nationalism/particularism.

While the three empirical-historical chapters dealt with modernising agents and institutional patterns, in Part 3 I attempt to systematically compare the modernising

discourses of Liberalism, Fascism, and national Communism with what I call the transnational discursive paradigms, i.e., an analytical reconstruction of the dominant discourses that influenced Romanian modernisers. In the chapters 7-9, I seek both to compare Romanian and transnational discourse synchronically, and to discover diachronic continuities and discontinuities between Romanian discourses.

Finally, part 4 regards the contemporary post-1989 conflict over yet another project of modernisation in the light of the historical legacies as analysed in part 2 and 3. Chapter 10 focuses on both the attempts of the post-communists and the self-proclaimed democratic opposition to define modernisation in the 1990s (the analysis ends in December 2000). The conflict has taken the apparent guise of conservatism versus progressivism, as the post-communist project primarily entailed resistance against Western definitions of transformation, whereas the democratic coalition promulgated a highly Europeanist/emulationist project. Nevertheless, where the post-communists-turned-social-democrats successfully managed to create a syncretic ideology based on particularist, indigenist components as well as including primary components of the Westernising programme (European integration, marketisation of the economy), the largely neoliberal programme of the democratic coalition foundered on the lack of a 'positive consensus' and a failure to indigenise neoliberal discourse (chapter 11).

Part 1 Modernisation, transition, and varieties of modernity

1. Conceptualisations of modernisation

1.1 Introduction

The social sciences developed as a response and a reflection of deep structural changes in Western societies that manifested themselves particularly at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries.[4] Classical sociology occupied itself with assessing these changes, their origins and consequences, while it was at the same time reflexive of the contradictory aspects of the 'project of modernity'. The preoccupation of the social sciences with modern society, social change and its relations with deep structural changes in the Western world is still highly visible today and has found its latest expression in the overwhelming attention focused on the changes in countries that until recently formed part of the Soviet sphere of influence. Theorising social change has however come a long way since the advent of what we now call 'classical sociology'. Nevertheless, the insights provided by many of the current mainstream theories do not necessarily provide us with a deeper understanding of the complexity and diversity of the social world. This latter aspect – diversity - becomes particularly important for the analysis of current social change in the post-communist countries. Instead of building on the subtleties and insights into the down-sides of modernity of classical sociology, the transformations in the former communist world are predominantly interpreted as an affirmation of the Western modern project, foregoing the particularities and distinct histories of the societies involved.

In the approaches towards social change (referred to as 'transition') in Eastern Europe, the normative affirmation of the Western modern project has been a diffused, but mostly unproblematised element.[5] Until recently, the debate on 'transition' or, preferably, 'transformation', has been dominated by approaches that shared a number of elementary assumptions on the general nature of social change in Eastern Europe: the

[4] The roots of these major transformations, however, can be traced back much further (Arnason 2000a; Lepsius 1990).

[5] Some recent publications indicate that such an affirmation is increasingly considered untenable (see Bönker *et al.* 2002; Carothers 2002).

convergence of the post-communist countries with the West, rather than divergence; a teleological view of social change towards the end-state of a democratic market economy; a predominant attention to formal, procedural institutions (democracy, market economy) to the relative negligence of substantive issues (national identity, culture); an overall negative appreciation of the past (communism). As many could not fail to notice, this 'consensus' shows a strong affinity with assumptions of 'classical' modernisation theory developed in the 1940s and 1950s.[6] The re-emergence of modernisation theory, or at least some of its central tenets, means that those assumptions that had been held as untenable in the debate on 'classical' modernisation theory were re-inserted into studies on post-communism (cf. Knöbl 2001). A deeper understanding of those 'errors' ingrained in the concept of modernisation thus becomes a necessity for the eventual rehabilitation of the concept and for the construction of an alternative approach to social change.

1.2 One route, various routes, or varieties of modernity?

The debate on social change in post-1989 Eastern Europe has been dominated by, on the one hand, modernist approaches[7] that start from ideas on modernisation and development derived from experiences in other parts of the world that took place in other eras, and which are mainly concerned with the transfer of Western models and institutions, assuming a universal quality to modernity and modernisation. On the other

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[6] Altvater is one example: '[m]odernization theory only knows the extremes of inefficient socialist systems and efficient modern market capitalism and the transition from one system to the other. The possibility of a mixed economy or a 'third way' between capitalism and communism is viewed as a theoretically unjustified idea. Transition, is, thus, no more than the implantation of market mechanisms and of the functioning mode of money (which requires the institutionalization of a two tier banking system and a politically independent central bank), the building of political institutions of the nation state for making democratic participation possible and, last but not least, the development of a pluralistic civil society' (Altvater 1998: 592).

[7] I understand modernism as the affirmative reading of the dominant Western program of modernity, embodied by the Enlightenment and individualist liberalism. In terms of the attainment of social knowledge, modernist approaches tend to 'conflate the imaginary signification of modernity with the reality of social life in Western societies' (Wagner 2001a: 4).

hand, modernist approaches have been critiqued by historically informed approaches which acknowledge that the transformations contain unique elements as a result of the particular (communist) experiences of the Eastern European countries (I elaborate on the critique of modernist approaches and attempts to overcome its deficiencies in this chapter and chapter 2 respectively).

The modernist approach is ahistorical in that it largely ignores distinct historical legacies which might have an important impact on the current transformations and thus render these transformations different from other experiences, whereas the historical approaches show a sensitivity towards historical legacies but often understand these legacies in the light of a rather narrowly circumscribed vision of modern society. In sum, modernist approaches assume that there is essentially one pathway towards modern society; the post-communist societies can follow this pathway by closely implementing Western models and ideas. The historical approaches question the modernist notion of a singular pathway and see various routes emerging out of the confrontation between the immediate past and the present, although they leave a singular definition of modern society largely unquestioned.

Put in this way, the debate on transformation in Eastern Europe looks highly similar to the debate on modernisation that emerged in the post war era. From the Second World War until the late 1970s, modernisation has been defined in three ways (following Janos 1978; see also Harrison 1988 and Tiryakian 1991): first, the so-called 'evolutionist' interpretation, which identified one historical pathway available to modernising countries, i.e. the repetition by the 'late developing countries' of the experiences of Western capitalist countries or 'early modernisers' (modernisation theory); second, an interpretation that claims the Western experience as the end-goal for modernising countries, but identifies different ways of reaching that end-state (Barrington Moore; Bendix); third, the interpretation of the Western experience as historically and essentially unique, which leads to a denial of its validity for modernising countries (dependency and world-system theory).[8]

[8] If we would accept this last stance, we would have at least two patterns of modernisation, i.e., the experiences of the 'successful' Western countries, and the reactions of the rest of the world to these experiences (Janos 1978: 73-74).

A critical view of these various perceptions of modernisation holds that a singular view of Western modernity as a universal phenomenon runs into problems; modernisation cannot mean *one* road to a singular end-state of societal evolution, as even the experiences of the Western states themselves are too diversified to justify assumptions of a global convergence (as also highlighted in current discussions about varieties of capitalism, see Hall and Soskice 2001). Additionally, modernisation might vary in form and content not only in spatial terms but also over time.

In the 1990s, two approaches have attempted to reformulate modernisation as a concept by explicitly starting from a rejection of the modernist assumptions of modernisation theory. Neo-modernisation theory has tried to amend and change original modernisation theory, but has left the singular view of modernity largely unproblematised (see below). The approach of 'varieties of modernity' tries to break with modernisation theory in the most radical way in that it denies modernisation to be a purely Western phenomenon and sees several 'modernities', of which the Western is only one variant. Rather than understanding modernisation as leading to the convergence of modernising societies towards a unified, homogenised modernity, it perceives modernisation as creating conflict. Furthermore, it assumes that various patterns and visions of modernity have developed rather than a single main pattern of Western modernity (see chapter 3).

Whereas the classical sociologists mainly dealt with the advent of modernity in the West and the shift from non-modern to modern societies, with all the upheavals but also continuities involved, after the Second World War a major part of the attention of the social sciences interested in social change shifted to non-Western societies, mainly as a result of the decolonisation process. Not only did the huge developmental differences between the former colonies and the colonising states come to the fore, but also the difficulties of state-building, and the impact of the period of colonisation on the newly independent countries. So-called modernisation theories emerged in the 1940s and dealt explicitly with the problems of underdevelopment in decolonising states in Africa and Asia. Modernisation theory saw modernity as a Westernising and homogenising project (Kaya 2004: 30). In order to converge to the socio-economic level of Western states late-developing states had to adopt Western institutions and dismantle traditional

'barriers'. The logic of the economic development of states could be captured in the concept of 'stages or sequences of development', the most important being the phase of 'take-off into self-sustained growth', in which the transformation of a formerly traditional society into a modern, capitalist one would be secured.[9] According to modernisation theorists the world consists of 'relatively autonomous societies developing in relation to one another roughly along the same path although with differing starting times and at different speeds.'[10] The convergence of underdeveloped countries was deemed possible because the imitation of Western practices could ultimately lead to learning effects and catching up in terms of not only economic, but also social and political modernisation. More specifically, modernisation theory assumed that the arising middle class would be the main agent of modernisation and the flag-bearer of democracy (Rueschemeyer *et al.* 1992: 5). In this sense, development was seen as a repetition of the experience of Western countries, starting with England, in the 16th century.

In modernisation theory the experience of Western countries with modernity was mainly regarded as a positive one, and the variety of roads to modernity was amalgamated as one, smooth road without many upheavals, based on a specific reading of Western history since the dual revolution. This rosy picture of Western modernity was then used as a mirror for the non-Western societies, who should follow the same road towards 'modern society'. This picture of modernity and the understanding of modernisation as imitation found in various types of modernisation theory can partly be traced back to the specific origins of these theories, i.e. in the United States of the 1940s/50s. Disproportionately practised by American and American-educated sociologists (Parsons, Rostow) modernisation theory used a model of modernisation that was 'to an important extent an unreflexive projection of the liberal, secular, individualising values of 'establishment' intellectuals' (Tiryakian 1991: 170; see also Lepsius 1990 [1977], Alexander 1995). The perceived end-state of any modernisation 'process' was seen as the American societal model that existed after the Second World

[9] See Rostow 1960, mentioned in: van der Pijl 1992: 238. See also Harrison 1988: 26-8.

[10] Hopkins and Wallerstein 1977, quoted in: Linklater 1990. Notice the striking similarity with approaches towards the former communist countries today (this will be more exhaustively explored at the end of the chapter).

War, thereby equating history with the historical developments in the United States and the Western world at large, and ignoring important spatial varieties in reactions to modernity. In part, the negation of 'deviating cases' from the Western path to modernity – exhibited by countries like China and Russia - in modernisation theory had the character of a strategy of ideological immunisation (Lepsius 1990: 215).[11]

Not surprisingly, modernisation theories ranging from Rostow's stages to Parsons' functional-structural approach were fiercely criticised from the outside because of their unproblematic stance towards Western modern society as well as the limited insights it provided in the analysis of the experiences of non-Western societies. Simultaneously, the development of the theory was characterised by the continuous confrontation of anomalies and problems by modernisation theorists themselves and would eventually lead to massive self-criticism. The main elements of contention within modernisation theory were about the usage and substantive elaboration of the strict dichotomy between traditional and modern societies, the identification of actors who initiate modernisation, and the singular nature of modernity (Knöbl 2001: 155-220; I will deal with these aspects in chapter 3, in the context of the construction of an alternative approach). Critique also came from without, especially in the form of neo-Marxist, structural theories, which denounced the modernists' negligence of the implications of the world economic system for modernisation in individual countries. In the 1950s dependencia theory emerged, partly as a consequence of the experiences of Latin American countries with import-substitution models (van der Pijl 1992). Modernisation theory's presupposition that integration into Western structures would lead to development was refuted by dependencia theorists. It was exactly the international economic context and the role of Western states in the development of the less-developed states that was seen

11 In spite of the domination of the social sciences by the modernisation paradigm in the 1950s and 60s, countercurrents did exist in the form of intellectuals influenced by the Frankfurt School and people like Hannah Ahrendt, who turned around the teleological picture of global history ending in American society, i.e. they '[criticised] what they called the new mass society as forcing individuals into an amoral, egotistical mode. They inverted modernization theory's binary code, viewing American rationality as instrumental rather than moral and expressive, big science as technocratic than inventive. They saw conformity rather than independence; power élites rather than democracy; and deception and disappointment rather than authenticity, responsibility, and romance' (Alexander 1995: 18).

as the crucial factor hindering further development. Dependencia theorists argued that peripheral economies would be better off outside the capitalist economy, because otherwise the gap between centre and periphery would not only survive but become larger in due time (Linklater 1990: 97). According to the dependencia perspective, local élites in the peripheral countries 'co-operated' with élites in the core countries. This 'comprador bourgeoisie', however, was weakly rooted in the domestic economic structure and functioned as a direct commercial and financial intermediary for foreign capital, i.e. it was perceived as completely subordinated to foreign capital (Holman 1996: 10). Thus, whereas modernisation theorists argued that the primary agent for national development was the emergent bourgeoisie, dependencia theorists claimed the opposite. The bourgeoisie merely perpetuated uneven exchange relations between the underdeveloped peripheral states and the developed core instead of promoting national socio-economic and political development. Consequently, major parts of the domestic industry served metropolitan interests rather than the needs of the local population (Linklater 1990: 103).

Whereas modernisation theory took an uncritical affirmative stance towards Western modernity, dependencia theory asserted the impossibility for non-Western countries to reproduce this modernity. The reading of history in dependencia theory thus reversed that of modernisation theory. The historical developments that had led to Western modernity were seen as negative for non-Western societies and therefore a radically alternative pathway of development was deemed necessary. A theory that followed the arguments of the dependencia school but also amended them was world-systems theory, whose main exponent is Immanuel Wallerstein (the most important statement of the theory is Wallerstein 1974). Dependency theory used a structural and systemic analysis to explain national underdevelopment by placing different societies into the world-system of core and peripheral countries in the overriding context of the world capitalist system. World-systems theory built upon the same premises of core-periphery relations. However, the possibility for states to tear from the dependent relationship of underdevelopment to a position of higher status in the global hierarchy was acknowledged in the form of semi-peripheral states, states that had acquired some forms of independent development, and therefore slowly moved to the level of the core states. Ultimately, the world-systems theorists argued that autonomous development of

individual states was possible *within* the global capitalist system.[12] World-systems theorists, therefore, did not reject convergence to Western modernity outright as being detrimental for the modernisation of non-Western countries, as a certain upward mobility was indeed deemed possible for non-Western countries. In the end, however, the capitalist world-system was seen as a functional whole and in this way particular experiences of non-Western societies were analysed not as reciprocal to modernity, but merely as responses to the logic of the world system. Cultural heritages, internal adoption and adaptation to modernity as spread from the West were within such as theoretical model not possible.

Modernisation, dependencia and world-systems theory show in this respect strong parallels, i.e., both strands employ a singular view of modernity as the experience of the Western world to which non-Western societies must respond, either by adopting Western institutions or by contending Western hegemony; a modernity, however, to which these societies ultimately do not contribute. As Altvater remarks: 'Although the theoretical and political orientation of modernization and dependency theory are not reconcilable, the *normative* objective of an efficient market economy, of a rich civil society and a functioning democratic political system are unanimously shared by both approaches' (1998: 593).

The failure of Third World countries to take a stand against core countries in the 1970s - partly a result of the ascent of the so-called East-Asian tigers and the subsequent disintegration of the Non-Allied Movement and, possibly more importantly, as a result of significant changes in the Western world - led to a shift of the dominant paradigm towards underdevelopment into the direction of neo-classical ideas in economy and democratisation theory in political science. The collapse of the 'really existing alternative' of Soviet communism seemed to reconfirm the singular worldview of modernisation theory and therefore the possibility of a rehabilitation of classical notions

[12] In the final instance, however, world system theory only recognises the establishment of a world socialist order as the means to ensure the simultaneous development of all peripheral societies and the supersession of unequal development (Linklater 1990: 108). In theory, it never becomes clear though how a world socialist order could actually arise out of a capitalist one (van der Pijl 1998: 346).

of modernisation (Knöbl 2001: 13). Both neo-classical economics and democratisation theory are expressions of a revival of liberal individualist values (the former focussing on inter-subjective exchange relations and the latter on negative liberty), and a re-evaluation of modernity, i.e. a re-emergence of a positive, affirmative stance towards modernity as developed in the West. Markets as well as democracy were revived and combined in a new narrative. Analysing this narrative shift, Alexander remarks: 'in response to economic developments, different groupings of contemporary intellectuals have reinflated the emancipatory narrative of the market, in which they inscribe a new past (anti-market society) and a new present/future (market transition, full-blown capitalism) that makes liberation dependent upon privatization, contracts, monetary inequality, and competition.' (1995: 32) Alnog with the revival of the narrative of the market, the narratives of democracy and civil society also revived. After positively describing experiences in Latin America and Southern Europe, social scientists have now turned to Eastern Europe, turning the various experiences with social upheaval and dramatic change into 'waves of democratisation' (Huntington 1991).

Since the 1980s, the social sciences have witnessed the reincorporation of the assumptions of modernisation theory into democratisation theory (with its focus on the 'transfer of institutions'), comparative sociology, and neo-classical economics. These recent embodiments of modernisation theory have remained largely unreflective towards earlier raised criticisms and problématiques. In the context of post-communist Eastern Europe, these 'first-generation' theories have dominated much of the initial debate about transformation (cf. Bönker *et al.* 2002). Nevertheless, some steps have been taken towards the formulation of a revised neo-modernisation theory, most importantly by Edward Tiryakian (Tiryakian 1991; 1995; 1996), Piotr Sztompka (Sztompka 1993; 1995), and Klaus Müller (Müller 1991; 1992; 1995). The purpose here is not to give an exhaustive elaboration of these authors' attempts at reformulation, but to show that, though important new elements have been incorporated or are at least reflected upon, other problems of modernist theorising have remained (cf. Alexander 1995).[13]

[13] In chapter 2, the importance of this revival for the debate on Eastern Europe wil become clear.

Sztompka, in an initiation to reconstruct a theory of social change that can incorporate the experiences of the former communist societies, proposes to steer away from the paradigmatic focus of 'transitology' on institutional and political-economic change, in short, on a transition to a democratic and economic system, towards a 'cultural-civilizational' approach (Sztompka 1995). While introducing a wider agenda than the economic reductionism of many transition approaches, and emphasising the lasting impact of 'cultural-civilizational' elements (values, rules, standards) – and thereby underlining the historicity of current changes - Sztompka seems, however, to be unable to overcome an essentially singular view of modernity. Culture, in his view, becomes the equivalent of mental obstacles to democratic reforms in the form of a 'cultural civilizational syndrome', 'civilizational incompetence' or a 'bloc culture', and a 'socialist habitus' that proves detrimental to democracy and capitalism by inducing political passivity and corrupt practices. Modernity thus entails - similarly to the view of classical modernisationists – the universal nature and superiority of modern Western norms and values (for a similar critique, see Böröcz 2000). Sztompka's usage of the designation 'fake modernity' for socialism, as opposed to the Western 'authentic modernity' further underlines this argument (Sztompka 1993: 137, 140).

Another author that has sought to formulate a neo-modernisation approach is Edward Tiryakian (1995), who strives for an update of classical modernisation theory in order to shed light on the endogenous factors of the changes in Eastern Europe. Similar to Sztompka's approach, Tiryakian identifies cultural hindrances to political and economic change, most importantly in collective mentalities bred during decades of autocratic regimes, and in the lack of individualism and entrepeneurialism in Eastern Europe (Tiryakian 1995: 258-9). Despite the acceptance of a traditional-modern dichotomy that one might read into this, Tiryakian acknowledges that there are numerous routes to modernity (1995: 259-60; 1996: 3), and refers to different 'centres of modernity' or a 'cyclical nature' of modernity. He thus introduces an element of historicity in his view of modernity. At the same time, however, he seems to implicitly reproduce a singular view of modernity, i.e., an equation of modernisation with the modern society most successful in 'upgrading' (Tiryakian 1996: 3). Tiryakian defines modernisation as 'the purposeful, reflective, intended upgrading of a unit or a set of units to increase the productivity of that unit, or in social terms, to increase the wantsatisfaction of concerned

actors and to increase the number of social actors concerned' (Tiryakian 1996: 3). One may read this as an affirmative stance towards Western modernity, also because ' "upgrading" translates into improving the quality of life in various sectors of the human condition', whereas ' "downgrading" is not considered an 'underlying process of modernity' (Tiryakian 1996: 12, fn 5). The tension between increasing human autonomy and the simultaneous circumscription of that autonomy in any modern project seems absent here. Acknowledgement of the historical-situational meaning of modernity seems confined to the identification of different - historically relevant - routes to an essentially singular modernity. A further element introduced by Tiryakian is a theory of action ('bringing the subject back in'), in rejection of the notions of societal differentiation and systemic maintenance of earlier modernists (Tiryakian 1991).[14]

Probably the most sustained effort to criticise modernisation theory in the context of transition theory has been made by Klaus Müller. Müller emphasises the 'politics of modernisation' and the dynamic forces that create modernisation, as classical modernisation theory systematically ignores political and social conflict (Müller 1991: 270-1; 1992: 115). Moreover, Müller is sceptical of the one-dimensional 'market-induced' conception of modernisation that dominates the analysis of the changes in post-communist Eastern Europe, and which is based on the assumptions of spontaneous reorganisation, the 'transfer of institutions', and a negligence of the geo-temporal context in which the transformations take place (Müller 1992: 119; see also Bönker *et al.* 2002). Transformation cannot be reduced to economic liberalisation, as social norms

[14] This shift from a societal perspective to one placing the individual in the centre of social change is observable in Neo-Parsonian theorisation in general, which again takes an affirmative stance towards modernity and modernisation, this time by devising a theory of the individual, who plays the main part as the driving force of social change in a competitive environment of markets and flexibility (Wagner 2001b). Hence the focus on 'civil society' in which the 'individualised' individual can set his own boundaries by acting within different collectivities. Nevertheless, these efforts are testimonies to a return to modernist ideas in civil society that idealises 'qualities like rationality, individuality, trust, and truth as essential qualities for inclusion in the modern, civil sphere, while identifying qualities such as irrationality, conformity, suspicion, and deceit as traditional traits that demand exclusion and punishment. There is a striking overlap between these ideological constructions and the explanatory categories of modernization theory, for example Parsons's pattern variables' (Alexander 1995: 14).

and cultural values are crucial in the construction of modern society (Müller 1995: 283, following Parsons here). Although he does not construct a detailed new approach to modernisation, Müller points to crucial aspects that a revised theory of modernisation should incorporate. Like Tiryakian, Müller underlines the importance of a theory of action, i.e. the crucial role of political agency and strategic interaction or conflict over reforms, an emphasis which would correct the structural and functionalist assumptions of modernist approaches (Müller 1995: 282). This would also mean that, instead of departing from utilitarian assumptions towards actors' behaviour, one should consider 'the interpretative patterns with which the actors of transformation perceive themselves' (Müller 1995: 284).

These last remarks point to some aspects fundamental to an interpretative approach towards the transformations in Eastern Europe, and to modernisation and modernity in a general sense. Such an approach finds an effective point of departure in approaches that underline the potential varieties of modernity, something that will form the basis for my own approach. Before turning to the elaboration of this approach, I will identify some essential assumptions of classical modernisation theory, as well as the re-emergence of these assumptions in transition theory in order to have a stable ground on which to construct an alternative approach.

1.3 Presuppositions of modernisation theory

The role of history in the modernist conception of social change

Modernisation and history are inextricably bound up with one another. As history evolves, the process of modernisation proceeds with it, or, at least, this is often assumed in the modernist view of modernisation. If viewed in this way, modernisation is not the outcome of human action, but, on the contrary, its evolutionary nature gains a Hegelian logic, as a universally valid and a-historical given of progress, irrespective of the individual actions of those that are struggling within the process of modernisation.[15]

[15] History is then reduced to a: 'mode of knowledge which equates history with a clear progression through determinate stages. One of the key legacies of nineteenth-century positivism in this sense has been to naturalize and objectify history as a quarry for the social sciences, able to provide inert material for the formation of general laws. The flaw in this use of history is to present it as a

Although actors (especially élites in non-modern countries) perform a special, 'functional', role in initiating modernisation, after its actual beginning, i.e. after the actual adoption by a given society of the necessary instruments for modernisation, the process as such is assumed to take on an autonomous form and beget a sequential logic. The objective, evolutionary nature of modernisation is perhaps most visible in Parsons' and Smelser's widely used notion of 'functional' or 'structural differentiation'. The notion of differentiation implies that the main logic by which traditional society evolves into a modern one is the division of society into evermore specialised units or sub-systems. Through societal specialisation into four sub-systems (politics, economy, integration and value-maintenance), and the increasing functional specialisation of these sub-systems (according to functional exigencies), society obtains an ever-higher level of societal integration and coherence (see, e.g., Parsons and Smelser 1956: 39-51; Parsons 1964; cf. Knöbl 2001).[16]

Despite an overall determinism and evolutionary approach present in modernisation theory, some authors that could be placed broadly within the modernist approach did point to the diversifying and non-linear nature of history, and argued that, although similarities in historical experiences can be identified, different trajectories in pursuing a modern society were possible, as was the non-achievement of modernity. Reinhard Bendix criticised the uni-linear nature and presumed inherent logic of modernisation. According to Bendix, two phenomena preclude any uni-linear reading of history.

First of all, as societies are not only subject to internal processes of social change, but also receive external stimuli, modernisation is bound to take a different shape in societies in which modernisation is initiated at a later point than in the original modern societies. International emulation, which Bendix understands mainly as 'the diffusion of ideas and technology', plays a crucial role in modernisation, as, 'modernization, once it

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teleological account which ignores the unique standpoint of human agents as participants within history, and thus actively able to interpret and actualize history through thought. It is to visualize history as an objective context to be established and verified, rather than as a particular way of seeing, interpreting and ultimately acting' (Amoore *et al.* 2000: 58).

[16] Another instance of determinism is found in the afore-mentioned Rostow's proposal of a stage-like character of societal historical development, in which different instances in the history of a given society can be 'read' as different instances of a pathway towards a 'modern' society.

occurred anywhere, alters the conditions of all subsequent efforts at modernization' (Bendix 1967: 328). Therefore, the 'timing and sequence' of modernisation matter greatly, and any modernisation project, in turn, cannot be exclusively dictated by an ever-progressing logic. Thus, Bendix points to the role of agency in modernisation as the 'intervention' of the government, particularly in 'follower societies', plays an important role in the direction modernisation takes (Bendix 1967: 327). Bendix further objects to a view of mutual exclusivity between the traditional and the modern, assuming a radical rupture between modernity and pre-modernity. A radical rupture makes possible the equation of what is 'modern' with the particular Western experiences of rationalisation, bureaucratisation, state-building, industrialisation and individualisation, observed in the Western world from the 16th century onwards and hence the proposed archetypal institutional structure for any modern society, consisting of a market economy, a democratic political system and a nation-state.[17] The assumption of a decisive break in history obscures historical continuities, and its essentialisation of Western modernity into a universal experience ignores the possibility of changes in Western modernity over time. Moreover, the perception of an absolute break in time also makes it difficult to perceive the traditional in modern societies. Bendix, in contrast, assumed that the emergence of modern society was the result of 'culminations of specific European continuities' and could thereby overcome the highly dichotomised vision of the traditional and the modern, and point to continuities of, for instance, collectivism and particularism in highly modern societies. Acknowledging the particularity of Western modernity also allows for a more open understanding of 'later

[17] The amalgamation of the Western experience of modernity with all others could also be found in the writings of the classical sociologists, such as Marx, Durkheim and Weber. As Wittrock puts it: '...for a long time in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, modernization seemed almost self-evidently to be identical with Westernization. The champions of a triumphant European and American economic, political and cultural expansion and growth, at home and world-wide, but also its critics such as Marx, showed little inclination to question this equivocation of modernity with the development and diffusion of the cultural program of one type of civilization' (Wittrock 1999: 320). Similarly, Therborn remarks that '...neither sociology nor latter-day modernization theory was systematically concerned with the possibility and the eventual character of different routes to and through modernity. The former should be forgiven, as they dealt with the emergence of a new type of society or civilization, but later unilinearism has no excuse' (Therborn 1995: 5).

modernities', which perhaps partly develop by following the Western experience ('catching-up'), but always have creative space for interpretation and adaptation according to local circumstances. [18]

Where Bendix criticised the evolutionist nature of modernisation theory and acknowledged the possibility of 'different routes' to modernity, Barrington Moore empirically elaborated on these different routes in a major historical-comparative work, in which he analysed different revolutions – in England, France, the United States, and China, Japan, and India – and focused on the inter-linkages between social groups, especially the landed classes and the peasantry. He eventually came up with three ways in which societies have been transformed from agricultural into modern industrial societies, i.e. bourgeois revolutions leading to capitalist democracy, abortive bourgeois revolutions leading to fascism, and peasant revolutions leading to communism. According to him, '[t]he ways in which the landed upper classes and the peasants reacted to the challenge of commercial agriculture were decisive factors in determining the political outcome' (1966: xvii). Barrington Moore acknowledged that modernisation does not necessarily entail the repetition of Western experience, and take a variety of forms. Modern societies do not necessarily have to be capitalist and the 'partial truth emerges that non-democratic and even antidemocratic modernization works' (1966: 159), as seen as for instance in Soviet Russia, or the other socialist countries.[19]

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[18] The 'forced choice nature of the binary categories' (Alexander 1995: 15; Alexander calls the use of these dichotomies 'binary coding') makes the vision of alternatives to social life almost impossible.

[19] Notwithstanding this more interpretative approach to social change, Barrington Moore did not seem to circumvent the problem of an evolutionary logic in his work. His ultimate persistence on a stage-like character of social change becomes clear in remarks such as '[t]he fact that any specific institutional complex develops first in one country and then in another... is no bar to a generally evolutionary conception of history. No single country goes through all the stages, but merely carries the development a certain distance within the framework of its own situation and institutions' (1966: 427). Furthermore, similar to Bendix's observation, Barrington Moore acknowledges but never works out systematically that 'the methods of modernization chosen in one country change the dimensions of the problem for the next countries who take the step...' (1966: 414). Nevertheless, Barrington Moore mainly looks for explanations in the differences between the routes in an intra-societal way, focusing on commercialisation, the relations between the peasantry, the upper landed

Whereas the original modernisation theories assumed a deterministic logic of the modernisation process, the theoretical counterpart of these theories, i.e., structural theory in the form of world system theory, can be said to acquire a functional and systemic logic after the modern world system is in place. Although structural theory (together with its predecessor dependency theory) formed a direct reaction to modernisation theory and refuted its presupposition that integration into Western structures and the adoption of Western institutions by peripheral societies would lead to a repetition of Western 'modernisation', it became itself trapped in proposing a functional-structural logic to history. The behaviour of the basic units of the modern world system, states, is analysed only by referring to the logic of a system which is characterised by a periphery dependent on the core, and in which the only change possible is the succession of hegemonies (Wallerstein 1974: 349-50; see for similar critiques, Sewell 1996: 248-51[20]; van der Pijl 1998: 346). In this case, modernisation consists of the challenge to the hegemonic power at any given point in time, and a potential bid for replacing the hegemonic power in the world system.

The traditional versus the modern

In the modernist approach, traditional and modern societies are conceived of as two, mutually exclusive, societal systems, each with entirely different sets of attributes. An almost infinite range of attributes for each kind of society has been proposed. In its most simple form tradition was equated with features such as irrationalism, particularism, and a religious world view, whereas modern features involved rationalism, universalism, and a secular, individualist world view.[21] More sophisticated models involved, for instance, a diffused social structure as opposed to a specialised one, ascriptive forms of status as opposed to status based on achievement, particularist criteria of recruitment as opposed to universalist, meritocratic ones, collectivism as opposed to individualism, and

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classes, and the nobility, without systematically regarding extraneous influences on domestic phenomena.

[20] As Sewell puts it: 'the fates of local communities are determined not by local causes but by the operation of global, system-level causes... But once we have begun to explain spatially and temporally localized events as a consequence of their place in a totality of world evolution, we are perilously close to teleological explanation' (1996: 249-50).

affectivity as opposed to neutrality (the ones mentioned here are Parsons' 'pattern variables', see Sztompka 1993: 74). By means of these attributes, one would be able to identify different forms of societies, and range them according to their level of modernity. As social change is understood as the transition of traditional societies into modern ones, traditional attributes must necessarily give way to modern ones. Under such assumptions of teleological social change, i.e. all social change is directed towards a given end-state, one is essentially only able to show the approximation of a given society towards the generalised Western model.[22] Yet, this identification forecloses the analysis of the potential occurrence of unprecedented phenomena, reinterpretations of modern features in local contexts, as well as social conflicts over modernisation and the possible contingent nature of certain historical events. The often assumed interrelatedness of sets of attributes in 'before-and-after' models (Bendix 1967: 315) further complicates the identification of alternative experiences with modernity.

Agency and modernisation

In general, modernisation theory worked with an evolutionary understanding of social change, and was dominated by studies that engaged in large-scale, comparative and mostly quantitative research. The assumption of the general validity of Western modern society inherent in most modernist approaches, which provided the basis for an evolutionary understanding of history, was however constantly in tension with the particular constellations that had brought about Western modernity itself. In other words, even if a general logic of modernisation could be detected, it was always embodied by specific modernising agents. Within the debate on modernisation, one tried to identify those actors or constellations thereof that were held to be the initiators of social change as they would embody a necessary 'dynamic potential' within a traditional environment (Harrison 1988: 30-1; Knöbl 2001: 179-87). Such agents would emulate modern institutions, which would subsequently be diffused throughout traditional society. Various contenders for the role of 'change agents' were proposed. For the most part, the popular and rural masses were ignored, in favour of a focus on the

[21] That this was not true for all modernist theorists is shown by Knöbl (2001).

[22] Modernists could thus understand the 'alternative' strategy of modernisation in the Soviet Union as 'fall[ing] within the general pattern' (see Müller 1997: 16).

higher strata of society, and especially political élites and intellectuals, from whom the diffusion of cultural values to the larger masses and the capacity for mobilisation were expected to emanate (Harrison 1988: 30-1; Knöbl 2001). As, in an empirical sense, such actors often failed to live up to their role of 'functional élites', a safer agent of modernisation seemed to be the urban middle class, which was deemed best capable to engage in the diffusion of modern values. In this sense, the expansion of the middle class was seen as a necessary condition for the moderation of social conflict and the development of democracy. In this assumption, modernisation theory came close to neo-Marxist approaches, which also see the bourgeoisie as the prime modernising agent in peripheral societies, albeit an agent that would prolong these societies' subjugation to core countries. The designation of one, universally applicable, agent of modernisation proved hard to reconcile with reality in many societies, and was abandoned for a much more abstract approach towards social change, most prominently by means of Parsons' and Smelser's introduction of structural differentiation as a way of both circumventing rigid uni-linearity and agentless social change (Knöbl 2001). Nevertheless, in transition theories dealing with post-communist societies, assumptions on specific dynamic actors (entrepeneurs) that are identified as the carriers of modernity have reappeared.

2. Recurring ideas of modernisation in transition theories

2.1 Introduction

The swift demise of communism as a real and viable alternative to Western modernity was widely interpreted as the apparent victory of a singular model of modernity throughout the world. This is particularly visible in the way policy-makers and the academic world analyse the changes as such and prescribe policies to be implemented in order to ensure a smooth transition process for the countries concerned. Debates have, until recently, been dominated by various strands of what we could call (neo-) modernisation approaches (cf. Altvater 1998; Bönker *et al.* 2002), which demonstrate a significant continuity with the modernisation approaches of the 1940s and 1950s. As elaborated above, modernist approaches perceive a unique answer to major social problems such as underdevelopment and poverty in the form of a transition and adaptation of the former socialist societies to a Western type of democratic market economy. The countries concerned need to adopt Western political, economic, legal and financial institutions and to rearrange their state structures and budgets according to Western norms. In short, they have to transform their communist societies into Western-type capitalist and democratic ones.[23] A partial revival of modernist theoretical ideas as well as ideas of totalitarianism has occurred (the later approach of totalitarianism, that departed decisively from Hannah Arendt's initial historical-philosophical study, regarded communism as a pathology rather than as an extreme case of modernity). Both theories repudiated any 'modern' aspects of the socialist experiments and their revival pushes contemporary research towards normative and policy-oriented approaches that analyse current developments in terms of approximation to a Western model of society (cf. Müller 1997). Concerning the wider debate on Eastern Europe, the theorisation of

[23] Cf. Alexander: 'Jeffrey Sachs and other *simpliste* expositors of the 'big bang' approach to transition seem to be advocating a rerun of Rostow's earlier 'take-off' theory. Like that earlier species of modernization idea, this new monetarist modernism throws concerns of social solidarity and citizenship, let alone any sense of historical specificity, utterly to the winds' (Alexander 1995: 44).

changes has (perhaps until recently) been dominated by what has been termed 'transitology', including descriptive as well as prescriptive approaches, both of which share some basic premises:

> ... the Soviet model is seen as having failed in competition with the west, and its legacy is reducible to after-effects: dysfunctional patterns of development and mentalities unadapted to the market continue to obstruct the progress of transformation. The victorious western model has, by the same token, become a blueprint for the future, and the agenda of the transition can be defined in terms of measures and policies which would bring the countries in question closer to this really existing ideal. ... The most fundamental – albeit often latent - premise of transitology is that the current western constellation of capitalism, democracy, and the nation-state (allowing for some differences of opinion on the relative weight of the last factor) represents a universal and definitive model on its way to global ascendancy (Arnason 2000b).[24]

As noted at in chapter 1, theories about post-communist societies are informed by two different points of departure. The first one is the idea, as described above, that the collapse of communism has confirmed a singular view of modernity. For the 'transition countries', this means that their experiences are basically comparable and compatible with earlier experiences elsewhere (Latin America, Southern Europe; see for instance, Przeworski 1991). This means that theoretical concepts as well as models of modernisation developed for social change different in time and place can be applied to the current experiences without much amendment. The basic premise is that the 'democratic market society' is 'universally applicable' (Bönker *et al.* 2002). Despite the

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[24] These premises are to be found in different guises not only in the theoretical debate but also in the policy-making world. Assessments of the transformation of the countries concerned are made by the European Union (EU), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations (ECE/UN), major rating agencies who assess countries' credit-worthiness and investor-friendliness, the academic world itself, etc. As Müller (quoting Giddens) argues, original modernisation theory – despite major criticism from within and without - has survived in this 'wide variety of comparative studies conducted under the auspices of the international organisations, such as the reports of the International Labour Office (ILO), numerous special investigations by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank's annual *Human Development Report*...' (Müller 1995: 269). All these analyses accrue from the idea that these countries are located on a specific point of a continuum which consists of a socialist centrally planned economy on the one hand and a capitalist democratic society on the

dominant and paradigmatic position of modernist approaches, this view has been steadily criticised, not only on the basis of observed empirical deviations (prolonged socio-economic crises), but more importantly, on the basis of its primary theoretical assumptions, in particular modernism's inherent teleology and singularity. Current critique[25] - in a similar way as the critiques formulated on classical modernisation theory (see section 1.3) - focuses on the a-historical nature of modernist approaches, its passing over of diversity in terms of legacies and current experiences, and the modernists' theory of action. The critiques taken together form a second point of departure, in which post-communist societies are ultimately conceived of as being in a unique situation. This observation has led to the acceptance of varieties of experiences and different routes to modernity, and to the construction of theories dedicated to demonstrate the particularisms and divergence inherent in the transformation processes (these critiques comprise institutionalist approaches, political economy, and élite theories, as well as the neo-modernisation approaches referred to earlier in chapter 1; for the former, see Eyal *et al.* 1998; Eyal *et al.* 2003; Pickles and Smith 1998; Stark and Bruszt 1998).

A critique of 'theorising the transition' in Eastern Europe based both on the problems identified with modernist approaches, and problems specific to the 'transitology' debate will serve to further outline an alternative approach towards social change and modernisation in Eastern Europe. I will focus on concepts similar to those applied in chapter 1 to uncover the self-limiting nature of the debate on social change in Eastern Europe. As my claim is that current realities in Eastern Europe cannot be properly understood without introducing a history of earlier projects of modernisation within the region, embedded in a broader global understanding of modernisation, I will focus on the perception of temporality in relevant theories, the understanding of the modern, and the actors involved in promoting modernity.

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other. Assessments are made of where these countries are situated now and to what extent they approximate a final state, i.e. the Western democratic market economy.

[25] For an early critique, see Stark 1990; see also Bryant and Mokrzycki 1994.

2.2 Presuppositions of transition theory

History as past tense or history as continuity into the present?

Prior to 1989 communism was perceived – almost without exception – as a viable and stable system; its sudden collapse could not be accounted for in any theoretical way. Even the approach of totalitarianism, that regarded Soviet societies as ultimately unsustainable, perceived the same societies as completely centralised, its masses as completely atomised and thus incapable of action, and therefore radical change as not very likely to occur (see von Beyme 1994; Müller 1997). The downfall of the communist systems proved this – partially ideologically sustained – insistence on the stability of totalitarian society as ultimately unfounded. Thus, in the post-1989 debate on social change in Eastern Europe, the legacies of that same communist system have been interpreted predominantly as institutions and cultural attitudes of either a 'failed alternative modernity', or as incapable of convergence with Western modernity. So, where before 1989 totalitarian institutions were perceived as bastions of power, after 1989, the same institutions have been brushed aside as mere debris inhibiting the establishment of a true 'modern' society. In this context, shock therapies – triple adjustment programmes of privatisation, price liberalisation and macro-economic stabilisation - are promoted that should do away with the non-functional remnants of the past order, and create as soon as possible a situation in which, with a clean slate, the new democratic market economies can arise.[26] The totalitarian understanding of communism (i.e., as a pathology) has been re-adopted and complemented by neoliberal ideas that perceive the complete destruction of the old as a necessary condition for a new spontaneous market order. The triple package of shock therapy is not only attractive in that it contributes to reaching the stage of 'institutional vacuum' (along the way eliminating political attachments to the old system), but also in its promise to create a Western type of 'self-organising' market society (cf. Burawoy and Verdery 1999: 5).[27]

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[26] Even in the ever-present other 'extreme' of policy options for post-communist societies, gradualism, the notion of doing away with the old and starting anew is highly present.

[27] The meagre results of these shock therapies are then interpreted as signs of success, i.e. if one promotes the idea that post-socialist countries first have to go through a 'valley of tears' in order to emerge as stable and prosperous societies. Alternatively, badly functioning shock therapies are interpreted as consequences of bad management by international agencies such as the IMF and the

The 'transfer of institutions', and in particular the creation of a 'civil society' in post-communist societies is presumed to result in both political and economic structures that closely resemble Western ones, so 'transition is a relatively unproblematic implementation of a set of policies involving economic liberalisation and marketisation alongside democratisation, enabling the creation of a market economy and a liberal polity' (Pickles and Smith 1998: 1). The triple reform package should then primarily be read as a means to create efficiency and functional differentiation, i.e. dividing economy and politics, and politics and civil society in order to overcome the blockage of differentiation that apparently led to the implosion of communism (cf. Arnason 2000a: 73).

Transitology has been predominantly concerned with a radical and complete rupture with the communist past. The transition itself was meant to consist of the irreversible establishment of a differentiated democratic market economy, emphasising the end-state of systemic change, rather than the struggles and continuities involved in the change from one system to another (cf. Bryant and Mokrzycki 1994: 3-4). Two aspects become apparent here: first of all, history is read in a teleological way, as the evolving approximation towards an already known end-state, constituted by a single path or 'one best way'; second, this end destination is understood as the affirmation of Western modernity as a singular, universally applicable model. The normative rejection of alternatives to the Western model, as well as the unawareness of modern and potentially 'functional' features of the communist societies, however, results in a negation of essential differences within and between the Eastern European countries (Burawoy 1992), and at the same time to an a-historical homogenisation of the Western modern experiences. An instance of this is found in the notion of a 'return to Europe'. In one reading, it means the imaginary homogenisation of societal models into a singular vision of a democratic market economy to which the Eastern European societies are returning after a detour to communism. The revolutions are then seen as the confirmation of the authentic history of these countries: '[t]he movements away from dictatorship, motivated in practice by the most variegated of concerns, have been articulated mythically as a vast, unfolding 'drama of democracy' (Sherwood 1994),

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World Bank, or as the outcome of obstructionist behaviour by members of the old communist nomenklatura (cf. Burawoy and Verdery 1999).

literally as an opening up of the spirit of humanity' (Alexander 1995: 33). The idea of rejoining Europe can be attractive in a variety of ways. Delegitimised conceptions of a state-socialist society, and of Marxism-Leninism, made ruling élites in these countries – at least initially – seem very much attracted to the apparently neutral idea of rejoining the Western project of modernity. However, in reality, the move away from communism did not necessarily entail the direct imitation of, or the unproblematic support for, Western liberalism and democracy. Such a single-minded explanation of the idea of rejoining the West-European project of modernity stumbles across various problems (here, my comments are overlapping with the ones I made earlier). First of all, it is '[e]rstaunlich... in welcher Arglosigkeit sie in den geschichtsphilosophischen Tenor der älteren Modernisierungstheorie zurückfällt, um bei einer höchst riskanten Stilisierung historischer Verläufe anzukommen.' (Müller 1991: 279; see also Mänicke-Gyögyösi 1995). In short, by taking an ideal and normative idea of Western society as a *Leitmotiv* for transformation in Eastern Europe, the actual dynamics and conflicts in the processes are lost from sight. Once again, the assumption of a universal, a-historical logic to social change is present here. Secondly, the idea of a 'rückspülende Revolution' (rewinding revolution, as coined by Habermas 1990) that should enable a 'nachholende Revolution' refers not only to a highly problematic past.[28] More importantly, the idea of skipping over or erasing the socialist experiences as failed attempts of counter-modernisation in itself fails to lead to meaningful insights in current empirical situations. Thirdly, the concept of 'nachholende Modernisierung' amalgamates the various Western experiences with modernity into an ideal-type that is not a direct reflection of current Western practices but rather a normative projection of Western society on Eastern Europe. *In concreto*, this means that a version of Western modernity is promoted that is seemingly stripped from its internal contradictions. In reality, however, one could equally argue that Western experiences with modernity are likewise made up of *partial* modernisation, i.e. the Western project of modernity is not finished

[28] The assumption of a direct return to the interwar Eastern Europe with its liberal and democratic traditions implies a romanticised view of history that is hardly worth upholding, not in the least because of the fascist and dictatorial tendencies that followed many of the democratic experiences in Eastern Europe (Müller 1991: 280).

as such and always retains a temporary and situational character, that is to say, is always open to contestation and alternative interpretations.

Modernist approaches generally fail to appreciate both historical diversity and the possibility of contemporary diverging paths and interpretations of modernisation (von Beyme 1994). Prior to the by now seemingly self-evident downfall of communism in Eastern Europe, many theorists regarded communism as an alternative strategy to construct a modern society. However, in current-day transition theory Bendix's and Barrington Moore's critique of classical modernisation theory, in which they identified the potentiality of diverse ways in approaching the modernising project, is hardly incorporated. Instead, the triumph of the Western model as the only and therefore universal one has been widely recognised (without however being granted the status of 'grand narrative'), whereas the communist systems are primarily understood negatively[29]. This failure to provide an insightful account of the different experiences in Eastern Europe, both before and after 1989, leads to a rather 'restricted understanding of social change' (Burawoy 1992: 774). As Müller (1995: 272) notes:

> [w]ithout too much exaggeration, one may discern a convenient merger between economic theory, political science and sociology: neo-classical economists argue on the basis of functional requirements of effective markets; political scientists cite the imperatives of Western-style democracy; sociologists refer to the institutional requisites for functioning markets. All this makes sense in discussion of what East European societies do *not* have. The real question, however, is how rudimentary markets with fragile democracies can operate in times of lost orientation and in an environment of delegitimized institutions. And the kind of dynamics that this triggers.'

The main point for which modernist approaches have been criticised is exactly their assumption of uni-linearity and negligence of historical legacies. Alternative approaches take as their direct starting point the historical nature of the current transformations. They do not regard transformation as basically 'a one-way process of change from one

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[29] Indeed, Müller suggests using the term 'negative sociology' for approaches that use 'a kind of applied theory of totalitarianism which maintains that, since the system of real socialism has totally failed, it will shortly totally disappear – a process often labelled 'creative destruction'' (Müller 1995: 277).

hegemonic system to another' (Pickles and Smith 1998: 1). Rather, current social change is seen as directly bound up with old social relations and institutions, and therefore can only be understood in a historical way. The presentation of social change as a mere process of 'catching up', achieved by adopting the right institutions is rejected (see Pickles and Smith 1998, Burawoy and Verdery 1999, Arnason 2000b). Instead, alternative approaches focus on diversity, particularity and continuity with the past in order to explain and understand (diversity in) contemporary social change in Eastern Europe. The communist world is not then regarded merely as an aberration (as in totalitarianism) leaving behind only structures that need to be dismantled as soon as possible. Rather, its modern features are (often implicitly) acknowledged. Here, I will identify three responses to the dominant paradigm of modernist neoliberalism.

The first response is an attempt, as we have seen earlier, to revitalise modernisation theory. The essentially uni-linear and Euro-centric understanding of modernisation is left behind in favour of a historicisation of modernity through the acknowledgement of 'shifting centres of modernity' and the 'politics of modernisation'. As Müller has observed, 'modernisation' as a sociological concept and as a model for policy-makers, has undergone paradigmatic shifts in its short history: '[a]lthough the success of Western post-war modernization depended closely on a set of Keynesian policies until the 1960s, matters have radically changed in the last decade. In the early 1980s, 'modernization' came to signify an international policy of deregulation which rendered it increasingly difficult for politics to intervene in economic processes' (1995: 273). Despite the insights one gains from the actual historical-situational rootedness of projects of modernisation, it is less clear how one loses an essentially singular view of modernity in such a move. In other words, although the historical character of the current dominance of the neoliberal project becomes visible, potential diversity in dealing with contemporary modernity seems to be left unexplored.[30]

In a second approach, it is precisely the acknowledgement of diversity in current transformations that constitutes the theory's pinnacle. So-called path-dependency approaches point to the distinctiveness of the Eastern European experiences, in that current change is circumscribed by the endurance of older institutions. This means that a

[30] Although Müller does hint at the role of actors and conflict in modernisation (see chapter 1, p. 28), he does not systematically work out this observation.

new order is not built in an 'institutional void', nor on top of the ruins of communism, but is rather constructed with the legacies of communism, leading to forms of institutional 'bricolage' which might end in some kind of innovation (Pickles and Smith 1998: 1-4; Stark and Bruszt 1998: 7). Path dependency theory sees 'political economic transformation' as an 'evolutionary and path-dependent process', 'based upon institutionalised forms of learning and struggles over pathways that emerge out of the intersection of old and new' (Pickles and Smith 1998: 15). In other words, path dependency theory claims that current and future developments can only be fully understood if the past is reflected upon, so that the constraints and confinements as well as the possibilities for current transitions become clear (see for instance Stark and Bruszt 1998, Chavance and Magnin 1997, and some of the chapters in Pickles and Smith 1998). Despite this primary attention on contemporary diversity and the relation of this diversity with the past, the treatment of the past itself remains rather cursory in many path-dependency approaches. For Stark and Bruszt, the articulation of the past in the present has been confined to the moment of regime change that produces a variety of 'paths of extrication'. The specific ways societies emerged out of the revolutions of 1989 (reunification in Germany, electoral competition in Hungary, compromise in Poland, and capitulation in Czechoslovakia), consequently shaped political institutions and forms of interest mediation between state and society (Stark and Bruszt 1998: 101). Thus the outcome of the interplay between dominant actors (reform and orthodox communists, and ruling élites and opposition) at the - admittedly crucial - moment of regime change is taken as the primary factor in explaining diverse pathways in the 1990s (Burawoy 2001; Dobry 2000: 56). In short, the constellation of dominant actors at a particular intersection defines the specific pathway taken.[31] Despite the acknowledgement of diversity, one can identify here a form of historical determinism in which the eventual outcome is defined by a designated earlier moment of change, between which the paths of extrication then merely run their pre-defined courses (Dobry 2000: 62). What is more, it is not entirely clear why the moments of regime change embody the essentials of relevant history. Although the outcome of élite struggles in the moment of collapse of the old regime has important implications for the system that

[31] As Burawoy remarks: 'the diverse ways of reworking the past spring from diverse political conjunctures in the moments of dissolution' (2001: 1108).

emerges afterwards, the potentiality of the emergence of historical legacies in a later moment of the transition or the possibility for the occurrence of highly contingent events should not be ruled out.[32] So, other (long-term) continuities that might shape actors' behaviour after regime change then seem foreclosed from view, perhaps most importantly historically formed cognitive frameworks that potentially shape the course of transition (for instance, in the form of non-liberal and non-capitalist discursive traditions and the dynamics these discourses can create).[33]

A third response to the uni-linearity and evolutionism of modernist approaches picks up exactly this point. Neo-classical sociology (Eyal *et al.* 1998; 2001) explicitly underlines the importance of long historical continuities in contemporary social change. Moreover, the outcome of the current transformations is considered 'an open question' (Eyal *et al.* 1998: 39). The neo-classical approach, as path-dependency, problematises the modernist assumption of capitalism-by-design that can be imposed from above, creating institutions that will have similar outcomes everywhere. Instead, a potential diversity of outcomes is assumed, as capitalism itself can take the form of a 'diverse set of social actors and institutions'. According to neo-classical sociology, the particularity of post-communist (they refer to Central European, as distinct from Eastern European) capitalism is exactly a form of 'capitalism without capitalists', thus without the class that was historically significant in bringing about capitalism (Eyal *et al.* 1998: 3). Historicity is then a correction of the assumption of timeless social mechanisms and a way to bring out 'the historical specificity of our times' (Eyal *et al.* 2003: 17). Eyal *et al.* introduce a diachronic comparison of historical projects of modernisation, as 'Central European intellectuals have been attracted to various ambitious historical projects to reshape their societies, and [...] whatever else may be, the power bloc that rules contemporary post-communism is heir to their projects' (1998: 11). They identify different historical projects, in which different logics inform social agents: the nineteenth-century project of

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[32] As Dobry (2000: 58) asks: 'why, after all, the focus on "extrication paths", while details and descriptions frequently suggest the causal weight of the whole communist period, its social structures, and, in particular, the social networks generated during that period, which implies a whole other temporality than the short span of moments of "extrication"?'

[33] The unawareness regarding such features is perhaps also a result of path-dependency's explicit focus on different capitalisms rather than other, alternative arrangements.

a *Bildungsbürgertum* creating a bourgeois society, a subsequent reaction to the slow modernisation in the region in the form of communism and fascism, and the current re-emergence of bourgeois liberalism (Eyal *et al.* 1998: 24-36). These three projects have been shaped in different historical contexts, in which competing logics of social stratification existed, based on class and rank order. Different perceptions of the social order (legal-rational domination or clientelism) informed then the major social struggles, finding temporary solutions in institutionalised systems of stratification. Moreover, actors are seen as being endowed with different forms of capital (economic, social, and cultural) which provides them with different opportunities, depending on the dominant logic of the period. The particularity of Central Europe (and Germany) is considered to be the relative historical importance of cultural capital, as opposed to the significance of economic capital in Western Europe (Eyal *et al.* 1998: 25-6). In post-communist Central Europe, it is then again a coalition of agents endowed with cultural capital that shape the current social structures. Diversity in post-communist pathways, but also continuity is thus the outcome of agency. In times of social change individual actors seek to preserve their social position (or to remain in their social trajectory) by learning to adapt to external changes, partly by referring back to their earlier formed habitus (Eyal *et al.* 1998: 8-9, 39). They do not leave these habituses intact, but adapt them to the best of their capabilities to the new circumstances (hence the term 'trajectory adjustment').

Though neoclassical sociology goes a long way in historicising the currently shaped societies in Central Europe, and is able to explain the specificity of post-communist societies by referring to historically formed attitudes and institutions, the primary emphasis on a cultural bourgeoisie 'whose project is to foster the transition from rank order to a system of class stratification' (Eyal *et al.* 1998: 47) forecloses analyses of alternative projects of modernisation that might be pursued by actors with a very different mind-set. The insistence on the cultural bourgeoisie as the 'bearers of the project of modernization' (Eyal *et al.* 1998: 60) means that Eyal *et al.* see in Central Europe the emergence of a new project of modernisation, whereas Eastern Europe and Russia are characterised as being in the mere process of 'involution, i.e. a form of adaptation to the imposition of capitalism from above' (Eyal *et al.* 2003: 15).

The traditional versus the modern

The announcement of the 'end of history', which implied the triumph of a singular modernity, concomitantly recreated the modernist dichotomy between the traditional and the modern. From this perspective, the institutional and cultural legacies of communism embodied the traditional, whereas (a specific image of) Western society represented the ultimate goal of any modern project. Although modernists reproached the communist project for its self-acclaimed capacity to reshape society from above, they proposed an equally 'designer'-type of project in which the post-communist élites should copy and impose key Western institutions on their societies, namely in the form of a market economy based on legally protected private property and free competition, and political democracy based on a constitutionally guaranteed pluralism and party competition. The centrally planned economy was placed in sharp contraposition with the self-organising market, thereby evaluating the philosophy of the scientific management of society through the state as traditional and counterproductive, and the allegedly spontaneously evolving logic of the market as the archetypal modern solution.[34] State planning was associated with inertia and de-differentiation, and market forces with dynamism and differentiation. This contraposition of the state to the market was further exemplified in the distinction between self-reliant, closed economies, as opposed to open market economies, that were deemed highly functional in a globalised economy. Similarly, in the political sphere, the vision of a totally subordinated and homogenous society to the monopolist party-state under communism was contrasted with the Western democratic pluralist party system of institutionalised political conflict and a counterweight to state power in an autonomous civil society. On the level of the individual, (implicit) assumptions are made of an atomised, apathetic, state-dependent individual under communism (homo sovieticus) as opposed to a participative, socially active, rationally calculating, and autonomously acting individual (homo economicus) in modern societies. The cultural legacies of communism are then predominantly assessed in their quality of obstructing the transition towards the pre-determined goal of a democratic market economy. The labelling of communist legacies as 'cultural-

[34] Jeffrey Sachs has formulated the self-evidence of the superiority of market arrangements as follows: '[m]any of the economic problems solve themselves: markets spring up as soon as central planning bureaucrats vacate the field' (Sachs in: Bönker *et al.* 2002: 7).

civilisational syndrome' or 'bloc culture' - the outcome of both being the internalisation of communist norms and values and adaptive individual reactions towards communism - further underline their identification in strictly negative terms, consisting of passivism, political apathy, illicit behaviour, and a tenacity of 'welfarist' ideas (cf. Sztompka 1995).

The broad (but inflexible) distinction between communism as traditional and the democratic market economy as modern reproduces the risks inherent in classical modernisation theory, i.e. the construction of two mutually exclusive and 'generalizable systems of interrelated variables' (Bendix 1967: 309, for this critique on classical modernisation theory) which ultimately only allows for the identification of social change as the transition from one to the other. This risk has been acknowledged and problematised by those that emphasise diverse routes in transformation (just as Bendix identified the diversity of modern societies). Both Stark and Bruszt (1998) and Eyal *et al.* (1998) emphasize their concern for diversity in their inquiry into a possible variety of capitalisms. The diversity in transformation and outcome is, according to them, predominantly the outcome of different constellations of key actors and their perceptions.

Élites and social groups in transformation

One of the continuities in Eastern Europe is that the current renewed attempts at modernisation are to a great extent élite-driven projects, i.e. they are carried out by relatively small groups of individuals in society that are capable of initiating projects of social change (see Higley *et al.* 1998; Eyal *et al.* 1998). Whereas any definition of what an élite constitutes is difficult to uphold through time[35], theories dealing with social change rarely completely ignore the role of certain groups in society that seek to promote their own visions of that society. In classical modernisation theory, as well as in Marxism, there was a focus on either the urban bourgeoisie or the entrepeneur as the promoting agent of modern society. In the modernist approaches of transition theory, 'functional élites' or 'change agents' that will construct a new order on the basis of Western institutions are identified with radical reformers on a political level (in contrast

[35] Discussions about relations between governing élites and society can traced back to as early as the nineteenth century, most importantly held by political scientists such as Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca (see Bottomore 1993).

to conservative, obstructionist forces tied to the old regime). By means of the transfer of the right institutions by these modernisers, the right actors which can sustain the new order can emerge, i.e., the citizen and the entrepeneur, who are believed to share rather similar characteristics that are conducive to the new order.[36] As Eyal *et al.* argue, modernist thinking is based on the assumption that 'if you create the proper institutions, they will shape the individuals that occupy them so that individual behavior will conform to institutional constraints and imperatives' (Eyal *et al.* 1998: 8-9). This is so, because, by means of the withdrawal of the state from society (organised by the radical reformers), economic, negative freedom is created, which in turn also enhances political freedom, as individuals are less restrained by the state in their actions. In this institutional context, citizens and entrepeneurs emerge who hold the right mind-sets for the reproduction of the new order, whereas the role of the radical reformers is of a transitional kind. The absence of sustaining social forces is then interpreted as the need to create these social groups, partially to legitimate the new societal project, partially to create groups that actually promote the right vision of society.[37] However, the existence of the transformational élites identified with the modernising project is taken for granted in most cases (Arnason 2000b: 89).

The deterministic understanding and pre-defined nature of agency present in modernisation approaches is seen as a key problem by the aforementioned path-dependency theory and neo-classical sociology. One could read Stark and Bruszt's objection to considering the Eastern European civil societies as the main actors in the revolution and subsequent transformation as a critique of the assumption that a singular 'right' modernising agent can be identified (Stark and Bruszt 1998: 15-6). In this, they take issue with the exclusive focus on one set of actors supposed to bring about modernisation. Instead, they argue for an interactionist approach in which they focus on relations between actors and their perceptions of their opponents' strategies (Stark and

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[36] As, for instance, Kaminski and Kurczewska note: 'The two roles [of citizens and entrepeneurs] relate to different functional areas in social life, but they share many of the same traits. They entail self-reliant, self-confident individuals endowed with a sense of self-respect' (1995: 132).

[37] For similar reasons, communist élites considered it necessary to create the working class, and Eastern European Liberal élites in the interwar period perceived the need to construct the urban middle class.

Bruszt 1998: 16). They see 'these capacities, perceptions and strategies [as] fluid rather than fixed... [T]he political organizational identities of major social actors change as they react to and interact with other competing strategies in the political field.' Indeed, a historicisation of the role of élites further shows that in particular moments in history, in different societal contexts, different constellations of actors play the role of pioneers in a new society. To pinpoint one particular, a-historical agent of social change seems an unnecessary and, indeed, restrictive exercise. [38] Modern society does not necessarily arise with the development of a specific social group, but can take different forms throughout time depending on the actors that initiate a modern project. Neo-classical sociology indeed explicitly historicises the role of agency in modernisation. The 'right' agent of change, which according to Eyal *et al.* is usually identified with a capitalist class of private owners in theories of transition to capitalism, can take various historical guises. This assumption underpins their hypothesis that the specificity of contemporary Central Europe is that there is a capitalism *without* a propertied bourgeoisie in the making. In other words, they perceive post-communism as a new order in which the agent of change is not a bourgeoisie of private property owners, but a bourgeoisie which possesses culture or knowledge (technocrats and managers), thereby including technocratic-intellectual élites in the emergence of a new form of society (Eyal *et al.* 1998: 1). Nevertheless, where neo-classical sociology does take an open-ended and interpretative view of agency, it is still confined to the identification of a specific 'change agent'. The transformational élite sees itself as 'a historical vanguard whose mission is to create capitalism - even to create a class of proprietors' (Eyal *et al.* 1998: 163). Here they come close to modernist assumptions, and seem unable to identify qualitatively different projects of modernisation (or capitalism, for that matter) other than in terms of 'capitalists without capitalism' and 'involution'.

[38] In Western societies too, various groups have been identified as harbingers of change. As Bottomore notes: '[a]mong the social groups which have risen to prominence in the tremendous social and political changes of the twentieth century, three élites – the intellectuals, the managers of industry and the high government officials - have often been singled out as the inheritors of he functions of earlier ruling classes and as vital agents in the creation of new forms of society' (Bottomore 1993: 52).

3. Varieties of modernity

3.1 Introduction

Recently, social theorists have become much more sensitive in historicising modernity and modernisation, and have acknowledged the possibility of temporal-spatial varieties (see for instance Arnason 1999; Eisenstadt 1999; 2000; Kaya 2004; Sachsenmaier and Riedel 2002; Wagner 1994, 2001*b*). Although many theorists accept that modernity has enjoyed 'historical precedence' in the Western world and was eventually reflected in the 'dual revolutions', this is not taken to mean that Western patterns are the only ' "authentic" modernities' (Eisenstadt 2000: 3).

One way of interpreting the unique constellation that emerged in Western Europe and America is that all societies eventually have to come to terms with extensive changes and will therefore find themselves in a position of reactive or 'later modernising societies'. While these observations are basically right, the idea that later experiences with modernity can only be expressed in terms of the direct adoption of the political programme and institutional constellation of 'original' modernity, and diversity at most entails a 'short-cut' to Western modernity, leaves little room for articulations of local interpretation and creativity. Such a singular understanding of modernity assumes a universal validity of and convergence towards the Western model. Modernisation is then interpreted as a way to live up to the exigencies of the modern Western world, without paying systematic attention to the way in which different societies dealt or deal with different problématiques of modernisation over time.

Here, modernity is understood not as a singular programme in which essential modern features are promulgated (instrumental rationality, individualism, secularity) without the adoption of which individual societies cannot claim to be modern. Rather, I hold that modernity is open for different interpretations and therefore cannot be reduced to a narrow reading of modernity as the historical experience of the West. Nevertheless, if modernity as a concept is to have any heuristic validity for the analysis of different societies, it needs to be perceived as comprising at least some basic tenets and characteristics. Modernity is often defined in either a temporal and/or a substantive way.

The first refers to the understanding of modernity as an epochal phenomenon, as a distinct period in time that has broken decisively with the preceding periods. The second focuses on modernity as a set of key characteristics, which makes modern ideas and practices distinct from pre-modern ones. Although both conceptions are useful, they should not be conflated (Yack 1997). Whereas by and large a modern epoch can identified, it should not be perceived as an era in which only a singular programme of (Western) modernity reigns, but rather as an epoch in which major conflicts over the interpretation of modernity take place (cf. Arnason, n.d.).

At least four interrelated characteristics of modernity can be identified. A first important characteristic is the negation of traditional authority and a religiously legitimated political order. By denying the foundation of political and societal order on other-worldly grounds, modernising agents claimed the possibility of constructing a new order on the basis of self-produced understandings of such an order. The decisive departure from traditional understandings, however, simultaneously opened up the possibility for various, alternative visions of how modern society could be shaped. In this sense, modernity can be understood as intrinsically generating conflict over its meaning. A second, strongly related, key characteristic of modernity is the emphasis on human autonomy, i.e. the idea of the human being as a subject who is able to understand the world and act on these understandings. A third characteristic is the idea that society (and nature) is malleable, and that human beings can therefore reconstruct their own societies on the basis of their own visions (the latter two characteristics, which could be referred to as autonomy and mastery, or liberty and discipline, can be interpreted in diverse ways and as in continuous tension, see Wagner 1994; 2001*b*). A fourth characteristic is the essentially future-oriented nature of modern ideas and programmes of modernisation. By creating (utopian) visions of a better society, modern agents divide the present from the past, and claim that by means of decisive action these visions can be implemented in the present (cf. Eisenstadt 1999; Koselleck 1985; Therborn 1995).

If one were to follow an approach in which not so much the 'catching up' of other societies with Western modernity is emphasised, but instead the unique reaction of later modernising societies is taken as a starting point, modernisation can be seen to entail a wide variety of responses to the problems inherent in the political project of

constructing a modern society. It can then be acknowledged that original modernity takes the guise of a basic reference point for later modernising societies, without, however, exhausting the possibilities within modernity as such. An emphasis on particularities instead of commonalities creates the insight that '[h]istorically different beginnings bring about different modernities, and different contexts do not permit modernizing states simply to imitate the Western model of modernity' (Kaya 2004: 31). The origins of the modern experience of particular societies, the historical context and sequence of modern projects, the nature and position of modernising agents, and their specific interpretations and creativity are primary tools in such a perspective.[39]

3.2 Presuppositions of varieties of modernity

Historicity, agency, interpretations

Even if the origins of modernity or at least its most clear expressions as a historical phenomenon are predominantly identified with Western Europe and America, this does not mean that the Western experience can be essentialised into a universally valid pattern. Assumptions of ultimate global convergence towards a cultural and institutional model derived from a homogenised Western experience cannot be held up in the light of empirical-historical differentiation, both in the West and elsewhere (cf. Wittrock 2000). Projects of later modernisation are not simply repetitions of an already identified, singular pathway, which derives its ultimate historical significance from the two archetypal phenomena that ushered in the modern era, the Industrial and French Revolutions, but entail reactions, adaptations and interpretations. Three main assumptions of modernist approaches are difficult to maintain, if one accepts the historical nature of the construction of modern societies. First of all, a homogenising, converging and harmonising logic, immanent in the Western project of modernity (finding its latest expression in the notion of globalisation). Secondly, a singular and temporally constant interpretation of what the cultural programme of modernity entails (restricting the main components of modernity to instrumental rationality and

[39] The even wider temporal-spatial perspective proposed in the multiple modernities debate, that of a civilizational approach, is not followed in this study, mostly for reasons of vastness and intellectual faculty and familiarity required for such an enterprise.

individualism). Thirdly, a singular interpretation of the political/institutional programme of modernity (consisting of an archetypal range of institutions: capitalist economy, democracy, and nation-state).

A sociological approach that takes seriously the historical formation of modern societies, and therefore the contingency of social change, has to consider potential plurality in social experience. In order to leave behind a singular, teleological model, other patterns of modernity, and perhaps even, as some claim, multiple modernities (see most significantly, Eisenstadt 1999; 2000), should be considered as constituting the modern experience. Societies that were reactive to, rather than constitutive of 'original modernity' can be seen as, on the one hand, responses to the increasing diffusion and importance of Western modernity, thereby taking as the pivotal reference point the Western experience, and, on the other, as reworkings of key components of modernity (autonomy, rationality/mastery, identity) in specific spatial and temporal contexts, selectively incorporating some elements of the dominant Western programme, while rejecting others, and without necessarily discarding traditions (cf. Eisenstadt 2000: 14-5). Instead of the assumption of a singular crystallisation of modernity in the Western experience, despite its undeniable relevance for any other experience, the possibility of varying interpretations, priorities, and hierarchisation of modern elements in projects of modernisation cannot be overlooked.[40]

Instead of leading to convergence, modernity can be seen to have invoked differentiation between societies (cf. Arnason, n.d.). Different cultural and political patterns can be observed, which led, for instance, to the primacy of politics in some projects of modernisation (in which the state assumed a qualitatively specific role), whereas in the Western 'original' experience it was the primacy of the economy that formed one of the main foundations of the modern project. This means the acknowledgement of the possibility of distinct patterns and routes to modernity, as has

[40] As Arnason (2000*a*) observes, the premise that the current western constellation of capitalism, democracy and the nation-state represents a universal and definitive model for the post-socialist countries excludes any consideration of different pathways to a modern society. Moreover, the specific features of building a capitalist and democratic society on historical legacies and in interaction with global dynamics, that lead to very different outcomes of what is expected, is largely left unconsidered.

been recognised by the more critical exponents of modernisation and transition theory (Bendix 1967; Eyal *et al.* 1998; Moore 1966; Stark and Bruszt 1998). This also implies that a singular, deterministic logic to the formation of a modern society (as expressed in Parsons' notion of differentiation) cannot be observed, but rather a continual openness and conflict over the meaning of modernisation.[41] Tensions and conflicting interpretations arise from the confrontation of the universalistically formulated Western project of modernity with local traditions, but also from the selectivity and transposition of particular components by modernising élites (thus, instrumental rationality was at the core of the communist project, but this led to the suppression of societal differentiation, rather than to its diffusion, see Arnason 1993). Different logics feed into the emergence of distinct political and institutional patterns or experiences, not only in the form of temporary societal configurations, but also in their enduring impact on later modernising projects, often undertaken in reaction to earlier ones. Thus, as a final point, the potentiality of different emerging patterns leads to varying political and institutional outcomes of programmes of modernisation. This is so not only because local interpretations differ and are based on distinct cultural and historical experiences, but also because of the changing nature of 'original modernity' itself[42] and newly arising 'alternative modernities' that may become hegemonic in their own right. Even if later modernising societies are in principle always subject to universalistic representations of a dominant modernity, the changing nature of these representations or 'reference societies' as well as the emergence of alternative reference points lead to distinct historical crystallisations of modernisation projects. This ultimately also means that

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[41] In the context of post-communist Eastern Europe, Robertson has remarked: 'Thus although there is inevitably considerable interest in the practical problems of which kind of societal trajectory the largely post-communist societies of Eastern and Central Europe should follow, we need to know, more fundamentally, a great deal more about the – inevitably complex – ways in which actual comparisons of what Bendix has called "reference societies" are made. Such knowledge will clearly include competition and conflict within societies as to which societies – if any – should be, to different degrees, emulated; the institutional location of influential actors; the role of intellectuals; and so on. It is along such lines that we may "bring modernization back in" to social science.' (Robertson 1995: 227).

[42] For an account of the changing nature of Western modernity, see Wagner 1994.

these crystallisations cannot be reduced to expressions of a general historical pattern, but contain specific temporal-situational aspects.

A corrective to the central assumptions of modernist theorising mentioned above necessarily points to the crucial role of agency in modernisation (as underlined most forcefully by Bendix 1967 in the classical debate and by Eyal *et al.* in the transition debate), and, most significantly - yet not always acknowledged by the more critical voices - agency's interpretive and creative capacities.

In contrast with the assumptions of modernist approaches, the autonomy of modern agency is not restricted to purposive action that is ultimately to end in the realisation of a universal programme of modernity. Instead, the agentiality in modernity is to be found exactly in the proposed autonomy and reflexivity of individual agents (free from the constraints of the traditional order in the form of ruler-subject relation, the domination of religion, and nature). The presupposition of individual autonomy makes possible a potentially infinite range of interpretations and realisations of autonomy in a societal setting. The more or less coherent proposals for some kind of societal order put forward on a political level then constitute projects of modernisation. In this sense, modernising actors that initiate projects of modernisation are not merely promoting a unifying and universally applicable logic of modern society into their own, but are – by means of their particular socio-cultural backgrounds, but also through their circumstantial interpretation of key components of modernity – producing variety in modernisation. It is by reference to the autonomy and creativity of modernising agents that one can speak of 'different routes to and through modernity' (Therborn 1995), or that one can presume that, 'the best way to understand the contemporary world – indeed to explain the history of modernity - is to see it as a story of continual constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programs' (in the words of Eisenstadt, 2000). The subjectivity and creativity involved in modernisation means that instead of a process-like nature of becoming modern, one should instead speak of various projects of modernisation or 'modernisation offensives':

> ...[T]he notion of a 'modernization process' is inappropriately socially neutralizing. In its stead, one could speak of modernization offensives, which are regularly pursued by certain, often small, groups with certain expectations in mind, whereas other groups, often majorities, who are less well

> informed about the modernization effects, may have little to expect in terms of enablements, at least in the short run, and possibly do object, or would object if they had the necessary information and power... On a historical level, a major (though admittedly still crude) distinction between two kinds of modernization offensives should be made. Modernization offensives from above use the existing power differential to create enabling institutions, in which others will participate only later and often against the interest of the original promoters. Modernization offensives from below are counter-moves to defend groups who are the objects of modernizations from above against the constraints and exclusions effected by those modernizations' (Wagner 1994: 25).

What makes modernising agents modern is their intention to construct a new societal order that transcends and replaces the existing societal configuration. In such a view, society becomes 'an object of active reconstruction by human beings' (Eisenstadt 1999: 41-2). It is in this sense that modern actors are profoundly political, in that they propose to construct a new polity which they argue in some way better represents the (collective) needs of the members of that polity. These projects of reconstruction are never completely detached from local circumstances but depend in their 'assertability on the validity of claims about the nature and history of human beings as members of the posited community' (Wittrock 2000: 7). What becomes clear from Wagner's remark is that these 'modernization offensives' by their very nature – that is, their historical and therefore partial interpretation of modernity - create tensions as they produce 'constraints and exclusions', and are therefore bound to evoke counter-reactions as well as counter-proposals. In order to study modernisation one therefore needs to include counter-élites and their alternative proposals into the analytical framework.

Further refinements concerning the nature of modernising actors and their proposals can be made. First of all, modernising projects are mostly carried by political élites and intellectuals, the former on the basis of their pivotal position in the political centre and the latter in the capacity of constructing world views and providing legitimation to the political centre (cf. Eisenstadt 1992). In reality, any clear-cut distinctions between these two groups of actors are difficult to make, as their social roles tend to overlap to a large extent. However, at the same time, potential tensions do exist between these social actors, as modernising agents in their capacity as intellectuals tend to look for relative autonomy from the political center, thereby undermining political élites' authority (cf. Eisenstadt 1999: 47-8). Further relevant preliminary divisions can be made concerning the position of modernising actors in terms of their substantive proposals. Modernising

actors can take an affirmative stance towards the Western project, professing its universal and superior nature vis-à-vis traditional society, whereas counter-élites can strongly object to the presuppositions involved in the Western project. Here, a related distinction can be made, that is, some modernising actors tend to look beyond their own societies and traditions in order to modernise their own (referring to Western modernity or any other dominant, and inherently universalist, modern project, such as communism), and therefore to empower themselves in the local context by trying to implement similar modern programmes. In this, however, they always run up against other political actors with similar modernising ambitions, but who look to their own traditions for inspiration and who are concerned with contesting the universal nature of an extraneous project on the basis of its presumed corrosive effects for 'authentic' local traditions, culture, and identity (cf. Eisenstadt 2000; Geertz 1973).[43] This is closely related to the actors' perception of time, i.e., in terms of a primarily future-oriented conception of the construction of modern society, often in combination with a strong rejection of the order of the past, or a backward-looking conception, viewing the past as an ideal type of the common good (which can in itself also mean the projection into the future of an essentialised past). Finally, perceptions can entail totalising and utopian visions of modern society, professing a singular view of the common good, as well as more pluralistic perceptions, in which multiple understandings are basically accepted (Eisenstadt 1999: 68).

The consideration of relevant actors in any analysis of modernisation should therefore involve those actors that are initiating a project of modernisation, but also those that react, criticise and in some cases construct an alternative vision of modernisation. Modernisation is then ultimately about the conflict over its meaning, embedded in local horizons of signification. It is the subjectivity of the actors involved and the possibility of creativity, which lead not only to particular interpretations of modernisation, but which also have an important bearing on particular outcomes. The interpretations of modernisation are, however, not the result of unbounded and

[43] Any universalist project contains an inherent tension between its striving for local autonomy and the universalist nature of its proposals. As Kaya remarks in the context of Turkish modernity: '... the view of modernity as a universal civilization created a contradiction within Kemalism, that of autonomy versus universality; the latter would assimilate the former if it was achieved' (2004: 46).

completely voluntaristic discursive actions on behalf of modernising agents. Interpretations in themselves are the outcome of an interpretative process, which is bounded by: a) the position of the relevant actors in a political field (and thus related to interpretations and meaning-givings of other actors), b) the existing meaning-giving horizons in the local setting, and, c) externally available discourses.

The emphasis on plurality and diversification in the development of modern societies is a necessary correction to the overly unitary and uniform interpretation of modernity in classical modernisation theory and in current-day approaches to transition in post-communist Eastern Europe, both of which share a basic assumption on societal convergence. A plurality of experiences in the construction of modern society in different spatial and temporal settings is in strong contrast with a mutually exclusive understanding of traditional society (and its characteristics) on the one hand and modern society on the other. Modern society can be and has historically been understood in a variety of ways, depending on historical circumstances and existing traditions as well as the specific modes of creativity and innovation by local actors. The latter aspect often had to do - in the situation of 'later modernising' societies - with the reception and interpretation of what was elsewhere defined as being modern. Here, social theorising often leaves a gap in assuming that either modern ideas or perceptions have a similar signification everywhere, and therefore the difference between the place of origin and the adopting side does not exist.[44] Or, the stronger, normative assumption is made that some ideas are universally valid and therefore need to replace local, particularistic ones.

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[44] Cf. Robertson: 'The trends and tendencies that have constituted the central ingredients of sociological – more generally, social – theory have actually been advanced and formulated on the (usually implicit) assumption that a theorist can detect and discern certain general features of life inside a few West European and/or North American societies and then posit them as of sociocultural life *in toto*. This is, in fact, the presupposition on which the principle of 'grand narrativity' has rested. I believe this is a significant point, particularly since cultural theorists (not simply postmodernists) have, for the most part, been uninterested in comprehending how so-called grand narratives arose in the first place; except for amorphous and simple-minded invocation of the idea of 'Western hegemony'. Nor have they been directly interested in the concrete relationships between different grand narratives. The theorization of the issue of inter-societal, comparative dynamics is one aspect of the problem' (Robertson 1995: 219).

In both cases variety is left unproblematised, either because it is seen as irrelevant, or because it is something that is seen to disappear the more modern ideas and practices come to penetrate non-modern societies.

Social theorisation not only leaves a gap in terms of underestimating possible varieties in perceptions of modern society and discernable historical patterns, but also in the attempts made to understand the dynamics between extraneous ideas/models and perceptions of local modernising actors. In 'later modernising' societies, what I call transnational discursive paradigms have not only formed the key inspiration for modernising programmes formulated to reconstruct society, but at the same time constituted the main reference point against which particularist and 'traditionalist' view points were expressed. Such discourses of a universalistic nature have taken varied guises and have had a dominant influence[45] at various moments in time. Transnational discursive paradigms can be seen to share a number of features deriving from their universalistic postulation:

1. As these discourses are formulated in universal terms, i.e., postulate a universal validity regardless of local settings, they dissimulate their historical origins/context (cf. Lefort 1986).
2. At the same time, these discourses have local relevance for existing problems or for clarifying the perception of new problems. This also means that the universal nature of discourses can in certain cases co-exist with particularistic discourses (such as nationalism).

[45] Dominance means here that certain extraneous discourses have formed a crucial point of reference for internal debates on modernisation. Unlike the assumptions made on the nature of dominance elsewhere - for instance, in neo-Marxist debates on dominant ideology, i.e., as an expression of and non-materialistic mode of domination of the ruling class over the rest of society (Abercrombie, Hill and Turner: 1980) - I do not regard these external discourses as dominant because of their reflection of the distribution of social power in society (this is not always the case) or because of their ability to mystify these power relations. Instead, I regard certain discourses as dominant, because they go beyond national debates and form a crucial point of reference both for modernising élites and their adversaries in 'later modernising' societies. In this study, I will use the term transnational discursive paradigms.

3. Universalistic discourses constitute a paradigm in the sense that they promulgate a strong validity for various societal situations, and therefore tend to constitute the reference point for other modernising discourses.
4. The universal pretensions of these discourses do, however, make them vulnerable to 'unmasking' (Mannheim 1991), in that their historical and particularistic nature can always be exposed.

Universalistically formulated discourses of modernisation constitute a primary component of local programmes of modernisation. However, although local political actors emulate other modernities, they do not simply reproduce but also re-interpret and adapt universalistic models to the local context. Therefore, a 'logical' flow of modernity from one societal sphere to another does not occur[46] (cf. Kaviraj 2000: 140). In other words, a process-like and functional nature of modernity is historically and empirically difficult to observe. As observed above, the 'immigration of ideas' 'separates cultural productions from the system of theoretical reference points in relation to which they are

[46] The flow of ideas from one society to another is notoriously difficult to analyse (cf. Szacki 1995). Still, some useful though admittedly tentative suggestions have been made. Daniel Bell, for instance, refers to a qualitative difference in the interpretations of the nineteenth century ideologies outside of their originating context. In *The end of ideology* he sees a 'distinctive difference' between the 19th century ideologies that were 'universalistic, humanistic and fashioned by intellectuals' and were concerned with 'social equality... and freedom', whereas the twentieth century 'mass ideologies of Asia and Africa are parochial, instrumental and created by political leaders', and deal with 'economic development and national power' (Bell 1960: 403). I would propose to broaden this distinction to the experiences of Eastern European states in the second half of the nineteenth century and see the 'closure' of their ideologies as a reaction to 'original modernity'. Similar observations in different contexts have been made, as for instance in Russell's 'general principle', which he proposes when discussing the initial French reactions to English liberalism: 'a philosophy developed in a politically and economically advanced country, which is, in its birthplace, little more than a clarification and systemization of prevalent opinion, may become elsewhere a source of revolutionary ardour, and ultimately of actual revolution. It is mainly through theorists that the maxims regulating the policy of advanced countries become known to less advanced countries. In the advanced countries practice inspires theory; in the others, theory inspires practice' (Russell 1946: 581; cf. also Brown 1982: 271). See also Charles Taylor's perception that nationalism arose as a reaction to the 'two great inaugural revolutions of the liberal age' (Taylor 1998: 202).

consciously and unconsciously defined' (Bourdieu 1991: 164), recontextualising the ideas involved and changing their meaning and function. Actors involved in the importation of ideas use these ideas in a different social context (Mannheim calls this a *social* change of function), but they can also introduce concepts into an existing body of thought (an *immanent* change of function), thereby changing its ideational context (Mannheim 1971: 112-13). Modernity enters the local not only through the dominant nature of certain ideas and the attraction they provided for 'later modernising' countries, but also via the constitution of a direct reaction by the adopting societies to the original modernities.

3.3 A conceptual analysis of discourses of modernisation

My historical-sociological approach towards modernisation is an attempt to circumvent the problems apparent in the modernist theorising mentioned above. I start from the assumption that history is always open to new initiatives by agents, thereby departing from structural approaches that essentially see a singular logic to historical change. At the same time, I see agents as bounded by their own societal context, with its historically formed dominant meanings, as well as by external structures, in the form of transnationally dominant discourses of modernisation, which can empower local agents, but also bind them to particular interpretations of modernity.

In my case study of the modern experience of Romania, I will, in the first instance, give a historical-sociological analysis of four major projects of modernisation in Romania (national liberalism, fascism, communism, and post-communism) by identifying key modernising agents, conflicts over modernisation, and key aspects of political and economic institution-building (chapters 4-6 and 10). Secondly, I will synchronically and conceptually compare the discourses that underpin projects of modernisation with discourses of modernisation dominant on the transnational level, and which form a continuous point of reference in any project undertaken (see the chapters 7-9, and 11). And, thirdly, I will employ a diachronic comparison of the various local projects of modernisation. Between these projects, I will try to show continuity and discontinuity in interpretations of modernisation to ultimately identify a

Romanian pattern of modernisation. It is this particular pattern that constitutes the historical legacies that condition the post-communist project of modernisation.

I propose that contending political projects start out with a critique of existing society, what will be called here a *crisis narrative* (see for a similar concept, Hay 2001). I further assume that, starting from this critique, actors ultimately come up with alternative solutions to the basic problems of modern society. I understand the construction of modern society to be based on particular basic problématiques of a political, economic and cultural kind. These problématiques refer to questions of the construction of a viable political order (which involves state formation, state-society relations, membership of the polity), the generation and distribution of resources within society (economy and development), and the creation and diffusion of knowledge and meaning (these include definitions of collective identity, and the diffusion of societal models[47]) (see Arnason 1993; Sewell 1999: 56; Wagner 2001c: 7). In the ways various political actors deal with these basic modern problems we can differentiate the basic commonalities and particularities of political projects.

In order to further explore the ways in which particular actors confront these problems, I distinguish analytically between two levels in modernising discourses (for similar distinctions, see Campbell 2001, 2002). The first level and perhaps the most fundamental level is the politico-philosophical level, which consists of three elements: critique, interpretation/normative premises and legitimation. On this abstract level, the (prior) existing societal order is criticised, modernity is (re-)interpreted in the local context, and legitimations for a new societal project are called upon. In principle it is the critique on existing societal structures that provides the basis for specific local interpretations and legitimations for the new order (in relatively small and dependent societies like Romania 'reference societies' or transnational discursive paradigms play a crucial role). Critique can be seen as a disembedding mechanism in that it seeks to undermine the legitimacy of an existing societal order or dominant project of

47 Sewell depicts the 'typical cultural strategy of dominant actors and institutions' as 'efforts not only to normalize or homogenize but also to hierarchize, encapsulate, exclude, criminalize, hegemonize, or marginalize practices and populations that diverge from the sanctioned ideal' (Sewell 1999: 56).

modernisation, whereas legitimation entails the embedding of a new project in the societal context by articulating its superior relevance to that context. A second level entails the formulation of the institutional or strategic objectives of the modern project, i.e., the way in which it contributes to the construction of a new order. On this level the rather abstract assumptions of interpretation are translated into cognitive prescriptions or concrete solutions to identified priorities.[48]

Discourses of modernisation can be understood as sets of ideas or concepts that together form a more or less coherent programme for the engineering of society (cf. Wittrock 2000). As mentioned above, a primary distinction can be made within discourses, i.e., between two levels or qualities of ideas (see figure 1). The first level concerns normative assumptions that identify the ends of projects of modernisation. In other words, this level concerns ideas that capture the normative, politico-philosophical foundations that inform projects of societal change. A second level of ideas is that of cognitive ideas, i.e. strategic ideas more directly related to the institutions of social reality, and which identify the means for realising and institutionalising a project of modernisation.

Apart from the identification of different levels of ideas, I will seek to reconstruct discourses with regard to the substantive value of primary concepts in modernising discourses. I divide the normative and cognitive levels into conceptual categories in order to 'capture' the essence of what I see as concepts significant for the understanding of modernisation, and to facilitate comparison between different discourses. On the level of normative premises, I identify three categories: cultural inspiration; political foundations; and socio-political practices. Cultural inspiration refers to the orientations of particular programmes of modernisation, i.e., whether they depart predominantly

[48] An analytical scheme such as this one, however, does not always translate directly into historical situations; certain elements may prevail in certain situations, whereas others may remain in the background. Even more importantly, the coherence proposed by such a scheme is in reality hard to observe. Despite the caution with which a scheme like this should be handled, it does provide us instruments to distinguish between the various intentions of modernising agents and their projects of modernisation in different temporal contexts, and can help us to indicate continuity and discontinuity at various levels.

from a universal logic (adopting a model that is deemed universally valid) or primarily from a particularistic logic, in which modernisation is profoundly informed by local, intrinsic values. The conception of liberty/autonomy is central to any project of modernisation. It is exactly the idea that human beings can set their own rules and laws and can construct their own society, without the interference from others or without being oppressed by some form of tyranny or despotism, that forms the most crucial element in any project of modernisation (cf. Arnason n.d.; Eisenstadt 1999; Wagner 1994, 2001*c*). Nevertheless, what human autonomy entails and how it can be best realised is open to interpretation. The final normative category I employ, socio-political practices, regards the rationalities or logics that inform the construction of the political order, define relations between state and society, as well as membership of that society. Socio-political practices therefore regard the scope of authority as well as the intensity of its actions. The three normative categories do not exhaust discourses of modernisation by any means, but they are intended to give us some understanding of the orientations, intentions, and direction of projects of modernisation.

The three categories are interrelated and are congruent in the sense that taken together they often reveal a certain coherence. For instance, in fascist discourse, a particularist vision of society (as deriving its norms from its own traditions) is linked with a collectivist notion of freedom (an individual can only be free within its 'own' society), which in turn is linked with a total vision of the state (a state dedicated to the furtherance of the substantive notion of the nation). Notwithstanding this interlinkage, the three categories point to three distinct aspects of modernity. Cultural inspiration is particularly relevant for later modernising societies in that it reveals the primary orientation of political élites towards the external/universal or towards the preservation of the internal/particular. In other words, the emergence of Western modernity posed the later modernising societies with the question of their own position towards 'original' modernity (cf. Kaya 2004). Further, the category of political foundations is concerned with how freedom/autonomy is perceived in projects of modernisation, whereas socio-political practices regard the construction of society or the mastery of the human environment.

On the cognitive level, I distinguish the categories societal progress, collective self-determination, and political representation and control. The category of societal

progress refers to the nature and direction of social change as perceived in a project of modernisation. Progress can be defined in economic, political, or cultural terms and the configuration of a project of modernisation depends on the primacy of one of these spheres. Thus, for instance, in neoliberalism, the primacy of the economic leads to the relative negligence of other societal spheres. Collective self-determination refers to conceptions of independence and sovereignty, which are strongly related to the vision of the collectivity as such (i.e. based on political-civic or substantive definitions). Finally, political representation and control refers to the nature of political authority, the nature and the scope of state functions, and the nature of political participation.

As with normative premises, the categories of cognitive prescriptions are interlinked and tend to show a certain congruence and coherence among each other. Thus, the institutional organisation of the state often relates to a concomitant vision on socio-economic institutions (an interventionist state is congruent with an organised vision of the economy). Or, the vision of collective self-determination relates to a particular understanding of political institutions (the imperative of state sovereignty 'needs' an authoritative and capable state). Despite certain congruence the categories refer to distinct institutional terrain, i.e., socio-economic institutions, the nation-state, and political structures.

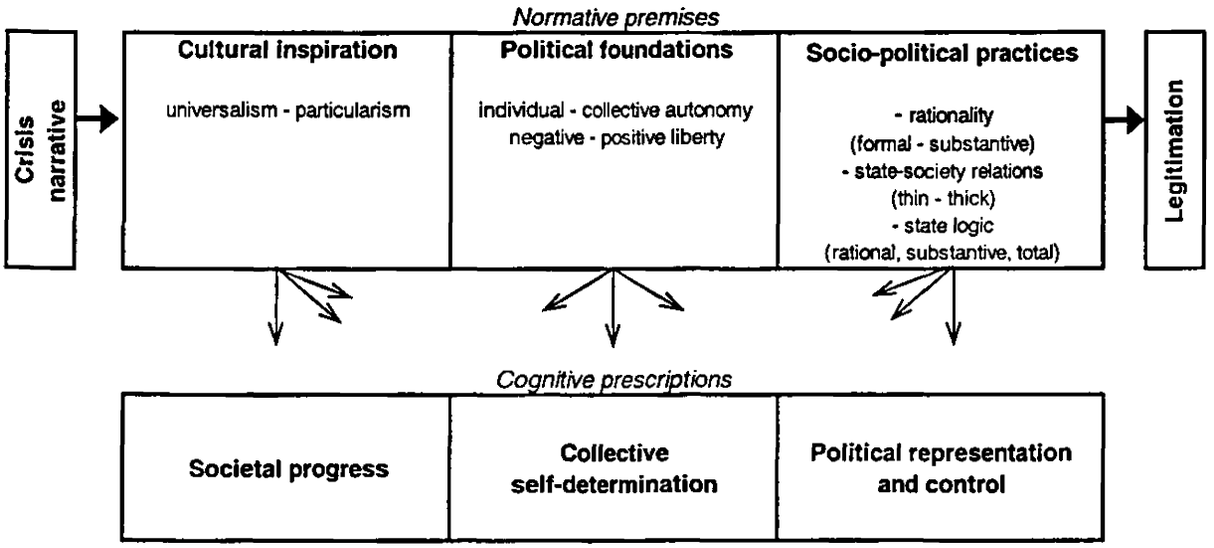
The relation between the normative and cognitive is more complex. In a conceptual sense, the normative premises and cognitive prescriptions are related in a non-linear way but are simultaneously closely connected. On the one hand, while normative premises inform and circumscribe the cognitive prescriptions in political programmes, abstract concepts can at the same time be translated into cognitive schemes in various ways. Thus, general concepts are open for different interpretations which makes that they can find expression in different institutional configurations. On the other hand, a clear-cut distinction between the cognitive and normative is often difficult to make in practice (cf. Campbell 2002: 25), also because the politico-philosophical dimension and the ideological/actional dimension should be considered as ultimately linked in that the normative premises provide the general principles which specify the concrete criteria used for the creation of institutions (Wagner and Zimmerman 2003: 250-1).

In substantive terms, the normative premises formulated in a discourse of modernisation form as a relatively coherent ensemble the framework or horizon within

which an institutional-strategic programme is formulated. In other words, the normative premises identify the hierarchy of preferences and priorities of modernisation. At the same time, specific core concepts formulated at the normative level are congruent with and 'precondition' a particular range of choices on the cognitive level. This means, for instance, that a collective definition of freedom predisposes modernising agents to dedifferentiated forms of political organisation. In a similar vein, a 'thick' understanding of membership correlates to a strong distinction between insiders and outsiders of a society and therefore to strictly defined membership criteria. Ultimately, however, the exact relations between normative core concepts and cognitive institutional programmes can only be assessed in historical-empirical terms, as the congruence between the normative and the cognitive is never fully predefined.

figure 1

Discourses of modernisation



Politico-philosophical premises

Cultural inspiration. I start from the assumption that projects of modernisation undertaken in societies outside the core of Western modernity (or, depending on the concrete historical situation, other significant modernities, such as Soviet communism) constitute a reaction against and/or an assimilation of modern ideas and practices. This assumption stems in itself from the consideration that modernisation is not an isolated

process which exclusively evolves within a particular societal context (as often presumed in modernist approaches), and in order for modernising discourses to gain dominance they must (at least partially) be formulated in universalist terms. This is so because their dominant nature implies that they have to be applicable outside of the particular context in which they arise and represent values and ideas that are meaningful or reproducable in other societal contexts.

The universalistic nature of dominant discourses of modernisation meets two kinds of responses in receiving societies. As mentioned earlier, and as presupposed in modernist approaches, local actors can respond to the challenge of modernity by emulating a dominant discourse and model (although emulation is always a partial and selective process) or they can respond by rejecting modernity in its entirety. Contrary to such a dichotomised approach, I understand local projects of modernisation as always combinations of both universalistic components of the dominant model and particularistic components derived from local culture and history. Projects of modernisation can therefore never consist of a wholesale emulation of a dominant model of modernisation (as this would lead to the complete dissolution of the local into the universal), nor of a radical rejection of every component of a dominant model. The latter is impossible because the dominant nature of the external model always brings about some kind of reaction from the receiving side. In other words, a society can never be completely protected from outside influences. Therefore, when I speak of radical particularism (for instance, in the case of Romanian fascism), this should not be understood as the complete absence of the influence of external models, but as the formulation of an alternative model which is purportedly based on purely local values, but in reality is formulated against the background of external models.

The tension between, on the one hand, the universalistic 'will to be modern' and thus to emulate modernity and, on the other, the desire to preserve some unique, particular national identity constitutes the specific modern experience of 'later modern' societies. Social struggle takes place between forces whose interpretation of modern society is profoundly (though not exclusively) shaped by emulation, and others who emphasise indigenous traditions as the basis for constructing modern society or deny the necessity

of change.[49] It is the outcome of this struggle between ideologies or interpretations that constitutes specific patterns of modernity. Clifford Geertz has called these two often antagonistic visions of society 'essentialism' and 'epochalism':

> To deduce what the nation is from a conception of the world-historical situation in which it is thought to be enclosed - "epochalism" - produces one sort of moral-political universe; to diagnose the situation with which the nation is faced from a prior conception of what is intrinsically - "essentialism" - produces quite another; and to combine the two (the most common approach) produces confused assortment of mixed cases (Geertz 1973: 251).

Political foundations. The objective of liberty or autonomy can be said to be the pinnacle of any project of modernisation (cf. Wagner 2001b). It is exactly the pursuit of extended liberty that underpins any political project directed against the old societal order. Nevertheless, rather than being fixed and well-defined political concepts, liberty and autonomy are open to interpretation. In this sense, they can be understood as political imaginaries. Imaginaries inform distinct political reasoning and action, but at the same time are always open for alternative interpretations. I will identify four understandings, or two pairings of understandings, that seem to me significant ends of projects of modernisation: individual and collective liberty; and negative and positive liberty.

The predominant understanding of liberty in Western modernity posits as its exclusive point of departure the individual subject. Often, the individual is defined as an abstract individual, without considering characteristics other than its being a human being ('stripped of all particularity', Dumont 1986: 117). The condition of freedom depends here on the extent to which the individual is able to act according to its own will and to define its own needs, without outside interference, or is able to emancipate itself further on the basis of its own capacities. In contrast, the collectivist conception of liberty starts from a collective (a social group, people, or nation) whose emancipation is the precondition for the liberation of the individual. In the collectivist understanding, it is the participation of the individual in and his sacrifice for the whole that ultimately makes him free. In other words, the freedom of the individual is a function of the

[49] As Kaya notes, the rise of 'original modernity' led to the 'radicalisation of dualities' elsewhere, i.e., it led to the self-questioning of non-Western countries that reacted by challenging Western modernity (Kaya 2004).

emancipation of the whole. In a radical understanding, it is the rapprochement of the individual to an ultimate set of characteristics that are deemed collectively valid that results in liberty.

A further important distinction between understandings of freedom is between negative and positive freedom (see Berlin 1969; Taylor 1991). Negative freedom is defined as a 'minimal area of personal freedom', i.e., as a space within which a person or a group of persons is left to act according to its own will, without being impeded by others or by some higher authority. This understanding of liberty is predominantly found in liberalism, in which a strong distinction between the public and the private is made, exactly with the idea in mind that what makes a person or group free is the ability to pursue unhindered its own good in its own way. In the negative understanding, nothing further is said of what should be a person's own good; this is deemed a private matter. The negative understanding of liberty is therefore in potential tension with a positive understanding of liberty. The latter posits that a person or group of persons is free only when it has the capability to be its own master, i.e., 'one is free only to the extent that one has effectively determined oneself and the shape of one's life' (Taylor 1991: 143). The actual capacity to self-mastery or self-governance then becomes important rather than the absence of coercive authority in pursuing one's own ends. A positive conception of freedom thus refers to a set of significant motivations and regards freedom as the outcome of the realisation of one's true will (Taylor 1991: 148). In this, conceptions of positive freedom can be combined with collectivist visions of freedom, from which it follows that only by realising a certain kind of society can the individual be made free (cf. Taylor 1991; such conceptions can be found in collectivist ideologies such as communism and fascism).

Socio-political practices. Two 'logics' or rationalities are particularly important in different perceptions of modernisation, i.e., the often invoked formal and substantive rationalities (taken from the classical distinction made by Max Weber; cf. Giddens 1971; Schluchter 1981). I understand formal rationality here as an approach to the construction of a political order in which the main purpose is to reconstruct that order on the basis of rationally calculable principles. In this understanding of rationality, the driving logic is formed by the idea that the more society is based on rational principles, the more society is subject to rational control and hence to human autonomy. If

substantive rationality is the predominant driving logic in the construction of a political order, rationality is based on the achievement of definite goals or values, and the furtherance of modernisation is therefore measured in terms of its rapprochement to these formulated, substantive goals. Modernisation is then guided by 'ethical imperatives, utilitarian or other expediential rules, and political maxims' (Schluchter 1981: 89, 108). In spite of the often presumed mutual exclusiveness of formal and substantive rationality, in the reality of modernisation these logics are often invoked in parallel, although one of the two tends to be dominant. The assumed tendency (for instance, in modernisation theory) in which the ever increasing diffusion of formal rationality is understood as an indication of increasing modernisation as such is not followed here. Instead, I see both rationalities as the most important ordering logics informing projects of modernisation, especially the political order, i.e., the state. The latter is a primary object of any project of modernisation, but is perceived by modernising actors in diverging ways. In this sense, I will distinguish between two – ideal-typical – extremes. On the one hand, a state can be perceived predominantly as an embodiment of formal-rational principles, i.e., as a 'rational state'. On the other hand, a state can be seen as the expression of specific absolute, substantive values, as a 'substantive-ideological state'. In historical reality, the democratic state would come closest to the former, and the totalitarian state closest to the latter. However, we should bear in mind that both conceptions of the state are in reality always an embodiment of both rationalities. It is thus the degree rather than the absolute difference that matters.

Two further understandings of the political order, particularly regarding state-society relations and the basis of membership of society, are the 'thin' and 'thick' understandings of social bonds. In the first, the relationship between the state and its citizens as well as between citizens themselves is based on social contracts. The relationship is perceived as one based on a political understanding between the parties involved, in which citizens give up some rights in the exchange of security provided by the state, which further governs the common order. Similarly, the relationship between citizens is based on a 'civic' bond, i.e., the common membership of a society. A 'thick' understanding of social bonds regards such a civic understanding as too shallow, and therefore departs from a more substantive understanding. In this perception, members of a society must have more in common than a social contract, and individuals are seen as

linked by 'deeper' ties. The most diffused version of such a conception is that where social bonds are seen to be based on cultural, linguistic and ethnic ties. In the first, 'civic', understanding a strict separation between state and society is supposed, whereas in the second, collectivist understanding, this distinction is much less significant (see Wagner 2001a: 40, 44-5).

Modes of legitimation

In order to provide a plausible and realistic image of a new political order, for the new order to consolidate and gain persistence, and to mobilise (parts of) the population for a project of modernisation, the latter needs justification or legitimation, i.e., 'normative validity'. Legitimation involves the modernising élites themselves, their staff or bureaucracy, but also other contending élites and the population at large. Legitimation underpins the modernising discourse by sustaining the 'rightfulness' or 'validity' of a modern project as opposed to other models. In other terms, a dominant élite's 'systematic' right to rule or its rightful claim to political power needs to be accepted, and its rule needs to be morally approved of, or, put in a different way, its dominance has to be 'embedded' in its cultural context and to refer in some way to societal 'needs' (order, wealth) (see Holmes 1993; Oberschall 1996: 97-8; Tarifa 1997: 439). Furthermore, the legitimation claims of a political project not only provide persistence to the project (in terms of confirmation of its leaders and their objectives) but also 'helps to determine the choice of means of its exercise' (Weber, cited in: Rigby 1982: 5). In other words, there is a congruence between the modes of legitimation invoked by the political élites and the shape the political project takes (Rigby 1982: 5). A further important distinction can be made between regime legitimacy and systemic legitimacy. It is only when the latter is called effectively into question, i.e. through a discursive representation of a new order which is perceived as a realistic alternative (what I have called earlier a crisis narration, see also Holmes 1993: 36), that a modern project gets into a systemic legitimation crisis. An important element in the persistence of modern projects is the prevention of emerging representations of alternative orders (cf. Oberschall 1996). Less profound legitimation crises, those that do not directly engage in attacking the system as such but only question its leaders or particular elements, emerge rather frequently in modern societies and can lead to a shift in modes of legitimation. Such crises typically occur

when regimes do not live up to their proclaimed self-identification (in terms of economic performance, human emancipation, providing order).

I identify various modes of legitimation that can underpin political projects, starting with Weber's classical distinction, but adding other modes that emerge as important in the various modernising projects I distinguish. The three modes of legitimation that Weber points out are traditional legitimacy, i.e. based on traditions and customs or the 'sanctity of age-old rules and powers'; legal-rational legitimacy, a belief in the validity of patterns of impersonal, normative rules; and charismatic legitimacy, i.e. 'a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities', a legitimation that can also become 'routinised', but then tends to relapse into either traditional or legal-rational legitimation (see Giddens 1971: 156-63; Rigby 1982: 5). A further mode of legitimation is based on absolute values or final goals invoked by political élites, a mode that has been called elsewhere 'goal-rationality' (Rigby 1980, 1982). Indeed, some political projects, such as the fascist and communist ones, attempt to mobilise the whole of society around one single goal or absolute value from which everything else derives. Complementary or auxiliary modes of legitimation are those modes of legitimation that contribute to the overall legitimation of a modernising project, but could in themselves not sustain a persistent social order. The most important of these modes is substantive or instrumental legitimation which is based on the (economic) performance and effectiveness of the political order and the satisfaction of social needs (cf. Holmes 1993: 15).

A final distinction should be made between the domestic and external nature of legitimation. In countries such as Romania, in which external models and ideas play such an important role in shaping domestic political projects, the 'domesticisation' of extraneous political models and its modes of legitimation not only means that the main claim to legitimacy is based on a *derived* legitimation, but also that claims to legitimacy need to be re-legitimised in the domestic context as their derived nature makes them constantly open to critique. In addition, the distinction domestic-external legitimation refers to the need of political projects to legitimise themselves in the international order (in terms of national sovereignty) as well as the possibility of legitimising a local project by referring to foreign experiences.

Strategic-institutional objectives

In later modernising societies, projects of modernisation have predominantly been initiated 'from above'. In this sense we can speak of the primacy of the political and state-driven modernisation in those societies that commenced modernisation in response to the West. The institutionalisation of projects of modernisation has in those societies principally been undertaken by 'institutional entrepeneurs' organised on the political level. These political actors ultimately act on the basis of their normative horizons, of which I have tried to capture conceptually above. In order to institutionalise their political programme of modernisation, modernisers need to transpose normative assumptions to the level of cognitive prescriptions. The normative premises on which any project of modernisation is based need to be translated into principles of action, or into cognitive ideas, for institutionalisation and political practice. I will analytically divide principles of action or what I call here institutional-strategic objectives into the following categories: collective self-determination; political representation and control; and social and economic progress. These categories refer to the nation-state, political-legal institutions, and socio-economic structures, but rather than defining in detail the ideational dimensions of these institutions, I try instead to specify their core functions. This means that the categories in themselves are fairly open-ended, but this seems to me a necessary 'sacrifice' in order to 'capture' conceptions of modernisation in radically different political discourses.

Societal progress. Rather than assuming a cross-culturally shared conception of societal progress - as the 'adaptive upgrading' of societies to ever higher levels of economic welfare, increased rationalisation and differentiation – different modernising projects have promulgated contrasting perceptions. To analyse these perceptions, it seems important to start from the hierarchy of values or set of premises that every modernisation project incorporates. Western modernity, for instance, can be said to be constituted by the primacy of the economic. Societal progress is to an important extent measured in terms of 'objective' economic growth, development, the diffusion of and innovation in technology, and increasing specialisation. Such a vision implies an instrumental-rational understanding of progress, in that the increased mastery of nature

by rational means is its key objective. Societal progress is understood as possible through the increased rationalisation and differentiation of society. Despite the predominance of such an understanding of societal progress, alternative visions are part and parcel of modernity as such. Thus formal-rational perceptions of progress can be countered by visions that emphasise the need for societal integration and homogenisation, rather than increased differentiation and specialisation. In both the fascist and communist projects, the visions of material progress and rationalisation were subsumed under the absolute values of the 'nation' and 'socialism', whose progress was not predominantly assessed in material terms. Ideas on the institutionalisation of societal progress can thus endorse dedifferentiation and centralisation rather than differentiation and specialisation (for instance, when a rigid division between state and society is denied in favour of far-reaching state interference).

Collective self-determination. As projects of modernisation in later modernising societies are in the first instance a direct response to the emergence of Western modernity and the potential threat it is deemed to embody, the necessary precondition for any project to succeed is the achievement of collective self-determination. Only when the effective enclosure of a political space has taken place is it possible for local political actors to set up a political order based on their own laws and exigencies. In modernity, the predominant vehicle for collective self-determination has been the nation-state. Political conflict in modernisation is in fact for the most part aimed at the definition and control of the modern state. Collective self-determination is indeed not a structurally secured condition, but is jeopardised both from the outside (for instance, by imperialist tendencies of other states or by territorial claims) and from the inside (by actors that question its effective realisation). One of the key issues in controlling the state is the question of how collective self-determination is institutionalised. Collective self-determination as such can be understood in various ways and can refer both to the external, international sphere and to the internal, domestic domain. Various understandings and prioritisations can be identified.

When a state enjoys effective formal sovereignty or 'constitutional independence' (cf. Beitz 1991) (and is thus recognised by other states) it can be said to be autonomous in its internal sphere. Such a formal, political and liberal definition of collective self-determination constitutes however just one understanding. Radically different, 'closed'

interpretations of collective autonomy argue for a widened scope of autonomy, which includes the economic and/or cultural sphere, and the protection of particular values and traditions. It is possible here to identify the relation between collective self-determination and the definition of the collectivity; political-civic or more substantive definitions of the nation have an important bearing on the institutionalisation of collective self-determination.

Political representation and control. The nature of political authority, the nature and scope of state functions, and the nature of political participation are essential components of a political order. The conception of political power as embodied in the state is crucial in any programme of political modernisation. Although in modernity political authority is always exercised in the name of the people, the mode in which popular sovereignty is to be achieved has been imagined by political élites in a wide variety of ways. In this sense, the democratic vision of the necessity of representing a plurality of societal interests on the political level can be countered by political visions which stress the need to represent the people as a unity, thereby claiming the possibility of a political representation of the 'general will'. Obviously, these understandings have far-reaching repercussions for the actual imagination of the institutionalisation of the political order as such. The understanding of the right scope of politics can range from a minimalist conception (the most famous examples are the liberal nightwatchman state and the contemporary neoliberal contextual state), a more comprehensive conception (in the form of the interventionist state), to a totalitarian conception, in which no boundaries between state and society are acknowledged and thus the scope of politics is virtually unlimited. The conception of representation is similarly subject to different interpretations, ranging from the emphasis on a full exercise of political rights by citizenship to passive representation by means of individual participation in the execution of pre-defined actions stipulated 'from above' (as for instance in communist conceptions).

Part 2 The Romanian experience with modernity

4. Modernisation in nineteenth-century Romania

4.1 Modernity and the Romanian Principalities

The emergence of modernity in Western Europe (and the United States) had a profound yet differentiated impact on the Eastern part of the European continent. In the case of the Romanian Principalities that would come to constitute the modern Romanian nation-state at the end of the nineteenth century – i.e., Wallachia and Moldavia[50] - the earliest impact was through the diffusion of the ideas of humanism and the Enlightenment. Since the sixteenth century, the Principalities had been semi-autonomous under the suzerainty of the Ottoman empire. However, this situation turned into one of complete subordination from 1711 onwards, when the so-called Phanariot regime was installed. The Romanian principalities were now ruled by intermediary Greek princes, who, in representing the Ottoman empire, deprived the Principalities of their local autonomy. It is in this historical and political context that the Romanian experience with modernity should be considered. The earlier diffusion of modern Western ideas formed the basis of the ideas of cultural unity and national consciousness. Notions of cultural belonging and common origins were transformed – influenced to an important extent by the revolutionary vocabulary developed in France - into political ideas of independence and self-rule that formed the main objectives of the nineteenth-century modernising movement. Here the term modernisation can be rightfully introduced. As elaborated in the theoretical part, I understand modernisation as a political project in which the main objective is the reconstruction of the political and social order on the basis of the ideas of human autonomy and the human capacity to transform existing structures on the basis of an 'imagined' ideal model of the polity. From the early nineteenth century

[50] Transylvania, which contained a sizeable Romanian population, was part of the Habsburg Empire. Although a significant part of the struggle for modernisation and national unification was instigated here (most importantly in the development of a national consciousness, through the idea of a Latin national identity, of the Transylvanian School), Transylvania only became part of Romania after the First World War. Here, I will focus on the modernisation project as it was initiated and partly realised in the two Principalities that were to constitute the first independent Romanian state.

onwards, such a project can indeed be detected in the Danubian Principalities. In particular in the 1820s, geo-political circumstances increasingly allowed for a local political project to emerge, as the Romanian Principalities gained some autonomy vis-à-vis the Ottoman empire and were opened up towards the Western world, especially in economic terms.

In this chapter, I will delineate the main contours of what may be called the liberal-national project of modernisation that emerged in the nineteenth century in Romania. I will identify the particular constellation of actors behind this political project, and their relation to adversarial social forces. Furthermore, I will analyse the specific pattern of Romanian modernisation by looking at three principal elements in the institutionalisation of the political project of the Liberal nationalists: the state, the constitution, and the economy. The main purpose of the historical chapters is not to challenge existing Romanian (and foreign) historiography by giving an alternative account of major historical events. I rather want to give a partial reinterpretation of the dominant traits of modernisation in Romania in order to place in relief a particular Romanian pattern, by emphasising deviances from as well as commonalities with modernity as it developed in the West. In this, I want to emphasise the 'essentially contestable' nature of modernisation as such, and to challenge the idea of ultimate institutional and ideational convergence present in main-stream theorising of modernisation and social change.

4.2 Modernising agency: a coalition of national consensus

The nineteenth century witnessed a gradual but significant change in the social structure of the Romanian principalities. The most influential native social class, the upper landowning nobility, gradually lost its traditional dominance over (native) political power to an emerging liberal state class and a commercial-financial bourgeoisie. The increasing importance of social groups associated with modernising efforts does not, however, signify the complete irrelevance of the traditional classes, nor does it exclude any modernising role that they played. The conservative parts of the upper nobility 'corrected' modernising tendencies not only by constituting a brake on radical change. It was also within them that significant alternative visions of modernisation developed. It

is important then, if one wants to understand the dynamics of modernisation in nineteenth-century Romania, not only to identify the 'progressive' political actors (in modernist terms, the 'functional élites'), their position within the political field, and their self-understandings. Equally, one needs to consider and evaluate the positions and alternative self-understandings of adversaries in the context of the construction of modern society. I propose that it is in the reciprocal relations and mutual understandings of the modernising protagonists and contesting actors that we can try to understand the agency behind modernisation.

Although proposals promulgating unification of the Romanians in a single state and independence from foreign interference were already circulating in the eighteenth century, the crystallisation of these ideas into a veritable political project only found expression in the first half of the following century. During the intensified subjugation of the Romanian principalities under Ottoman rule, ideas inspired by humanism, the Enlightenment, and liberalism were promoted by political writers, who predominantly defended a vision of autonomy and unification of the Romanian lands, against the foreign domination of the Ottoman empire. The political writers were mostly of a gentry background, more specifically from the higher strata of the native gentry. By the 1830s, however, the most radical political ideas did no longer originate from the higher strata, but from the middle and lower ranks of the native nobility (the so-called 'lesser' or 'middling boyars'). The younger generation of these lower ranks, for the most part born in the second decade of the nineteenth century, often studied abroad and had in this way been in direct contact with Western ideas (Janos 1978: 80-1; Siupiur 1998). An overwhelming majority of those whom in the 1830s would become the liberal, revolutionary élite had studied in France, especially in Paris.[51] Here, they came into contact with the revolutionary ideas (especially relevant were those regarding national emancipation) of, amongst others, Michelet, Guizot, and Quinet (see Bodea 1970). The young generation did not only refer to the external political situation (as the higher ranks had done) but also to the internal socio-political situation of the Romanian lands. Around the 1830s, the formation of a radical intellectual stratum became visible, which

[51] The studies taken were mostly in law (Rădulescu 1998: 113-4).

would form the main political force in the revolutions of 1848. These revolutionaries or '48-ers' (*paşoptişti*) went beyond the mere expression of economic class interests in their promotion of national consciousness, and a common history and culture (cf. Georgescu 1971: 51-3).

The most outspoken protagonists of a liberal and nationalist project for an independent Romanian nation-state thus stemmed mostly from a social background of native landowning classes, be it the middling or lower parts of those classes. In general, the higher layers of these native landowning classes shared with the lower an aspiration for native self-rule in the Romanian lands, but were less inclined towards revolutionary ideas of a complete reconstruction of the social order inspired by the French Revolution and liberalism. At the same time, and here comes to the fore a significant difference with the social forces that shouldered modernising projects in Western Europe, the (economic) bourgeoisie played hardly any role in the project of reconstructing the polity. This was so primarily because of the numeric insignificance of this social group in the Romanian lands at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and furthermore as a result of the mostly foreign nature of the merchant and capitalist classes. Those middle classes of native background (and therefore perhaps potentially receptive to liberal-nationalist ideas) seemed mostly suspicious towards modern ideas. Therefore, in the early part of the nineteenth century only a minor and rather insignificant part of the liberal movement could be associated with upcoming commercial interests.[52] The Romanian historian Boia (2001*a*: 32; cf. also Prodan 1971: 348) underlines the rather limited and even reactionary role played by a middle class in social change in nineteenth century Romania:

> In the first half of the nineteenth century the bearers of the notions of progress were neither the lower classes nor a practically non-existent bourgeoisie. The opposition between "old" and "new" did not separate antagonistic classes, but was, in fact, a division within the Romanian élite of the time. The wearers of the new clothes, with ideas to match, were, for the most part, young boyars. The same group could also be found at the head of the revolution of 1848... [T]he social category that we might describe as a somewhat insubstantial middle class, rather

[52] A gradually developing autochthonous middle class represented upcoming trade and commerce, but, by 1849, still only constituted about 8 percent of the population of Wallachia and Moldavia, Janos 1978: 75).

than a bourgeoisie in the strict sense, was far from being highly receptive to what was happening in the west of the continent.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, then, we can identify three groups of actors relevant for our discussion of the origins of and emerging pattern of modernity in Romania: the liberal nationalists, comprising mostly the middle and lower layers of the landowning classes, and striving not only for national unification and independence, but also for the extension of privileges and access to public functions from the higher to the lower landowning classes; the 'liberal conservatives', i.e., those parts of the higher landowning classes that equally aspired to native self-rule, but not to large-scale social reforms; and the conservative or reactionary parts of the landowning classes, that did not support any project of change and sought to maintain the status quo. All in all, the main protagonists and their adversaries in introducing a project of modernisation in Romania were part of an extremely narrow upper social layer, representing only a very small segment of the Romanian population (the majority of which consisted of peasants).[53]

Liberalism in Romania was thus carried by the indigenous gentry that strove for autonomy from the political authority of the Ottoman Empire. The native landowning classes had been rebelling against these foreign rulers since the eighteenth century, and managed to free themselves from direct foreign rule in 1821, in the wake of a large-scale social upheaval led by Tudor Vladimirescu.[54] The partial achievement of local autonomy brought to the fore internal divisions existing within the native landowning classes itself. In both Wallachia and Moldavia, the social groups that strove for unity and national independence organised in the respective Wallachian and Moldavian National Parties (*partida națională*), which represented both the upper and middle layers of the native nobility. The National Parties represented a political coalition on the

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[53] Prodan (1971: 349) mentions some 20 families constituting the upper layers of the native gentry, without specifying the dimension of the lower layers.

[54] In 1821, Tudor Vladimirescu, a popular leader of peasant origin, started a popular uprising against the feudal yoke and in favour of emancipation from the Ottoman empire. The revolt failed, however, and Vladimirescu was put to death (Giurescu 1974: 163-4). In the revolt's wake, the Ottoman empire granted the principal demands of the Romanian nobility, i.e., political rule by native princes and the exclusion of Greeks from public office, so as to prevent further revolutionary unrest in South-Eastern Europe (Giurescu 1974: 165; Seton-Watson 1934: 198-9).

basis of consensus on national self-rule. Nevertheless, within the National Parties, factions existed (the above-mentioned liberal nationalists and the liberal conservatives) that were divided over 'the profundity, the rhythm and the nature of the transformations, and the particular position in relation to socio-political structures' (Platon 1985: 72). Whereas the dispute over reforms points to conflicting positions vis-à-vis the nature and scope of modernisation, the argument over socio-political position involved the access to political government, and thus political power itself. The middle and lower ranks argued for extended access to public office. Partly rebelling against the upper strata of the landowning classes and partly seeking alternative social positions, these lower ranks strove for the institutionalisation of native political power in state structures, and the formation of a nation-state to create an enduring foundation for collective autonomy, led by an 'enlightened' and liberal political class.

Thus, despite the coalition of consent, the liberal and conservative factions parted ways on the mode of realisation of national self-rule. The radical elements amongst the liberal nationalists believed in direct action and organised their activities in conspirational associations, such as *Frăția* (Brotherhood, founded in 1843 in Wallachia) and *Asociația patriotică* (the Patriotic Association, founded in 1846 in Moldavia) (Bodea 1970; Giurescu 1974: 175-6). Eventually, these secret organisations defined the revolutionary ideology and prepared the political actions that led to the revolutions of 1848. The latter nevertheless failed as a result of interference from Russia and the Ottoman empire.

Attitudes towards revolution and radical change in general, and towards the reconstruction of Romanian society in particular, defined the constellation of modernising actors after the unification of the Romanian Principalities in 1859 (see section 4.3). In particular in the decade that followed 1866, the year in which the first national constitution was adopted, the liberal-nationalist and the conservative factions of the national parties organised themselves into the two main political parties that would dominate the Romanian political arena until 1914. The National Liberal Party (*Partidul Național Liberal*), though internally divided, represented the upcoming state bureaucracy as well as the burgeoning urban and commercial middle class, whereas the Conservative Party (*Partidul Conservator*) comprised 'liberal conservatives', reactionary

large landowners, as well as more progressive elements (Hitchins 1994: 22, 92; Iacob 1995: 228-39). Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the political class of liberal nationalists included not only the state bureaucracy but also an up and coming middle class with stakes in industry and finance rather than land.[55] In general, the rise and political empowerment of these new social groups formed a significant challenge to the position of the large landowners. However, the latter continued to play a crucial role in the Romanian political arena, as the Conservative party remained the immediate opponent of the Liberals until the 1920s.

The Conservative and Liberal parties were, however, not the simple embodiments and reflections of a declining traditional class pitted against an emerging modern, dominant class.[56] Both parties represented their constituencies not only in terms of economic class interests, but also promoted ideas and programmes of much wider and universal significance. Thus, where for the Liberal party the protection of native interests was of primary importance, its reference to the idea of national autonomy and its inclination towards universalist, Western-type of institutions had significant, long-term implications that went beyond narrow economic interests. The political imaginaries thus created (in particular those of popular sovereignty and social equality) informed the social struggle that eventually resulted in political 'voice' for the peasantry (cf. Platon 1985: 65). Similarly, the Conservative party, though ultimately defending and protecting the interests of the traditional upper nobility and therefore traditional, rurally-based societal arrangements, did so by invoking national traditions and pointing to the necessity of preserving a (rather recently 'invented') national identity. As such, they thus engaged in institutionalising a particularist tradition of thought that showed considerable affinity with other political discourses (especially peasantism and populism). This was the case of so-called 'progressive conservatism' that found its origins in the cultural association *Junimea* (youth), founded in Iaşi in 1863. This was a group of young Conservatives (mostly stemming from the upper layers of society and having studied in Germany) who introduced a 'critical culture' which promulgated an evolutionist view against the uncritical imitation and adoption of Western structures (see chapter 11). Rather than being an uncompromising and negative critique of

[55] For a detailed genealogy of the Liberal classes, see Rădulescu 1998 and 1999.

[56] A vision articulated in a particularly fortright way by Zeletin (1925).

modernisation, this culturalist doctrine formulated an alternative to Western universalism, admitting the necessity of change, but at the same time seeking to preserve national particularity based on authentic local experience (Călinescu 1988: 352-3). Key figures associated with *Junimea* (Petre Carp, Titu Maiorescu) formed a progressive faction within the Conservative party, aiming at the renovation of conservative principles in an attempt to adjust a conservative outlook to a changing society (cf. Iacob 1995: 238).

4.3 The emerging pattern of modernisation

The modernising actors in nineteenth century Romania were preoccupied with the translation of their political and cultural programme into durable political, economic, and cultural structures. In this sense, we can speak of an emerging institutional pattern of modernisation, in which the priorities of the modernising programme find 'solidification' in more durable institutions. These institutions, emerging from political action, can therefore be regarded to an important extent as the expression of the particular interpretations of modernisation that dominated the political arena. The most important object of political action was the establishment and consolidation of an independent and autonomous nation-state. This priority brought with it a whole range of reforms as well as conflicts over the substance of these reforms. It was simultaneously the outcome of consensus among the political élites on the importance for the modernisation project of national independence and collective autonomy. The absolute priority of independence - shared by the dominant élites - existed at the expense of other objectives of modernisation, although these were equally present in the modernising programme. The most significant was the social question or social equality, which in the Romanian context concerned above all the situation of the peasantry, and the political question of popular representation. Both objectives had been part of the revolutionary programmes of the Liberals, but became secondary in the actual institutionalisation of the modernising project.

The modern institutions - mostly of a political and economic nature - not only reflected the capacities of the actors involved and the restrained possibilities in which these structures were created. The general design of these institutions also directly

reflected the images and models that were derived from the Western experiences with reconstructing modern society (most importantly those of France). The 'forms' of the institutions were in a superficial sense rather indistinguishable from Western ones. Nevertheless, a rather different modernising pattern emerged from significant differences in emphasis, which were the outcome of the distinct interpretation of modernity by the modernising élites, and the encounter of foreign models with local traditions.

In the following I will avoid a detailed chronological history of institution building in nineteenth century Romania[57], analysing instead how the main objectives of the modernisers' political and cultural programme were 'solidified' in institutions. More specifically, I will look into how specific interpretations of the local signification of modernity (in confrontation but also in concomitance with existing traditions) were reflected in these institutions. Institutional change in nineteenth-century Romania began with the transfer of political rule from the foreign rulers to the local upper nobility. Subsequently, further advances towards the realisation of local autonomy were made through the Romanianisation of the economy, the embedment and expansion of native rule in the semi-constitutional Organic Regulations, the *de facto* and then *de jure* realisation of the unification of the Romanian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, and the wide-ranging internal political and economic reforms that were implemented in its wake.

Political institutions

A first advance towards the realisation of the main objective of native Romanian élites - greater local autonomy - was the result of the settlement of the political and social revolt of 1821, led by Tudor Vladimirescu. Paradoxically, the putting down of the revolt resulted in the concession of native rule to the local gentry by the Ottoman empire, instigated by the Turkish fear of widespread social disorder in the region (Seton-Watson 1934: 199). The change in political regime led to the election of native princes in the two Principalities (for a period of seven years). Furthermore, in the 1820s, the influence of the Ottoman empire on the Romanian lands diminished in favour of Russia, turning

[57] Historical narratives - including the establishment of modern institutions - can be found in: Georgescu 1991; Hitchins 1994; Seton-Watson 1934; Treptow 1997; Zeletin 1925.

the Romanian lands *de facto* into a Russian protectorate under Ottoman suzerainty. The most significant rupture with the old political system of foreign domination was constituted by the Treaty of Adrianople (1829), which underlined the administrative autonomy of the Principalities, installed the nomination of native princes for life, and stipulated the liberalisation of trade and industry in the Principalities (detaching them ever more from the Ottoman empire as the latter's monopoly over trade was abolished) (Giurescu 1974: 168). In the wake of the Treaty of Adrianople, local autonomy was not only more extensively guaranteed in a political sense, but also required a legal status in the form of the so-called 'Règlements Organiques' or 'Organic Regulations', introduced by Russia but elaborated by the Divans (constituted by members of the upper nobility) of the Principalities. The demand for the 'rule of law' instead of the arbitrary nature of Ottoman rule formed an important element in the native Liberal élites' interpretation of local autonomy (see Stanomir 2002).

The Regulations of 1831 established a quasi-constitution in that they legally stipulated native rule and a form of separation of powers between the rulers and a National Assembly, the latter made up of representatives of the upper native nobility. Nevertheless, these early constitutional forms not simply reflected an important step towards the creation of a modern society in the Romanian lands by founding a native political regime on modern legal-rational fundaments. The Regulations at the same time reproduced a tradition of princely rule, in which the ruling prince obtained prerogatives vis-à-vis the upper native nobility (though now put in modern, constitutional terms), while the lower ranks were excluded from political rule.

The knowledge of radical (French) revolutionary ideas held by the intellectual stratum that had formed out of the liberal-minded middle and lower nobility, informed a radical critique against these arrangements, also because the Regulations had been set up under a strong Russian influence and consecrated a continued foreign domination of the principalities. This political critique would eventually culminate in the 1848 revolutions (Seton-Watson 1934: 213). The revolutions of 1848 embodied in particular the critique of the upper nobility's domination of political rule and strove for the alternative of a constitutional state. Furthermore, the revolutionaries struggled for unification between the principalities, a more extensive form of independence, and socio-political reforms.

Only in Wallachia, however, did the 1848 revolution lead to temporary success in the form of a revolutionary government. The attempt to establish a fully constitutional state, which was to include a much larger part of the population in the political nation, was rather quickly aborted, and the political situation returned *grosso modo* to that of the Organic Regulations. Nevertheless, by 1859, in the wake of the Crimean war and the Treaty of Paris of 1856 (by which Russian tutelage was terminated and the Romanian principalities came under the protection of the Concert of Europe), a further advancement of the cause of the Romanian nationalists was achieved in the *de facto* unification of the two principalities through the election of the same person, Alexandru Cuza, as ruler for Wallachia and Moldavia. As Platon (1985: 76-80) observes, the union of the Romanian principalities should ultimately be considered as the outcome of the political action and collaboration of both factions of the *partida națională* in the form of promoting national unity.

The rather surprising outcome of the elections followed negotiations between the European, Russian, and Ottoman powers on the fate of the principalities, which had already resulted in far-reaching administrative unification (through, for instance, a Central Commission with legislative powers for both principalities), the establishment of constitutional government, and the abolishment of the privileges and monopolies of the native nobility (Seton-Watson 1934: 262-3). The resulting political unification created the preconditions for the ultimate objectives of the Liberal nationalist forces: the creation of a fully autonomous and independent modern state, whose sovereignty was acknowledged by the major European powers, and, concomitant with this desideratum, a modern, representative and constitutional government. These objectives formed the main component of political debate and action in the years to follow, eventually finding institutional expression in the constitution of 1866, and full independence in 1878.

The realisation of native rule and political unification had not been merely the outcome of political action by the Liberals but, as mentioned above, was the result of collaboration between the native political élites. Although one can speak of the predominant initiative of the Romanian Liberals in creating and consolidating a modern Romanian state, the Conservatives too left their mark on the actual pattern of institutionalisation. The relation between the two political forces evolved around their

interpretations of modernisation. The relationship ultimately consisted of a shared affirmation of modernity in the form of a modern constitutional state, but parted where the Liberal nationalists embraced the wide-scale social change that Western modernity implied. On the one hand, the Liberals and Conservatives were in consensus about the main goals of modernisation, i.e., national independence and the consolidation of a Romanian nation-state. This consensus consisted of the idea that national autonomy was only possible through the institutionalisation of a whole range of political and economic structures, as derived from Western examples, and codified in a Constitution. Further political consensus existed over the collective identity that the new order embodied. Both the Liberals and the Conservatives held an ethnic, cultural vision of collective identity, based on the historical origins of the Romanian nation, and specific characteristics such as religion and a rurally based culture. On the other hand, both factions represented mutually exclusive visions of the actual substance of the new order, and the balance between the new institutions and remnants of the old order. Where the Liberals were eager to found a new political system on the basis of legal-rational proceduralism and the creation of a sizeable middle class, the Conservatives were more concerned with maintaining a stable order by recreating the rule and privileges of the upper classes in the new state.

Both the consensus and conflicts between the two major political actors were reflected in the institutions created. The main, and shared, aspiration for collective autonomy was embodied in the Constitution of 1866, its establishment of a constitutional monarchy, headed by a foreign prince, and the internal sovereignty of the Romanian state. The predominant concern for national independence - rather than other concerns, such as the extension of socio-political rights - was further reflected in the narrow franchise on which the electoral system was based as well as in the strongly centralised form of the new state. Furthermore, the predominant understanding of independence as the independence of the Romanian nation, defined in ethno-cultural terms, was visible in the debate on Article 7 of the Constitution, which excluded non-Romanians from civil rights on the basis of religion. At the same time, the Constitution and the political institutions reflected the Conservatives' goal of maintaining traditional structures.

The Constitution of 1866 was formulated on the basis of two main sources, i.e., the Belgian Constitutions of 1831 and the French one of 1814, and the tradition of local constitutional projects, mostly formulated in the period 1822-1859 (Stanomir 2002: 87). The Constitution contained all the 'necessary' elements of a modern European constitution: national sovereignty, hereditary monarchy, representative government, the separation of state powers, the political responsibility of ministers, as well as civil rights, property rights, freedom of conscience, press, and education (see Iacob 1995: 225). It strongly underlined national independence by establishing national sovereignty as it identified the Romanian state as the executor of internal sovereignty and as an independent national actor on the international level. No reference was made in the Constitution to the suzerainty of the Ottoman empire or the status of protectorate under the Concert of Europe, thereby in effect proclaiming Romania as independent from external constraints (Iacob 1995: 227). Apart from embodying political consensus on collective autonomy, the Constitution was also an outcome of intense debate and political conflict between the two main political forces in Romania. This meant that the Constitution was in many respects the reflection of a compromise between the Liberals and the Conservatives. The Conservative influence was particularly visible in those elements of the constitutional regime where the traditional dominance of the upper layers of society was maintained (cf. Iacob 1995: 226). Thus in parliament, only a minor percentage of the representatives was (indirectly) voted by the peasantry and the less educated and propertied layers of the population. The Liberal plea for a unicameral system was rejected by the Conservatives and eventually turned into a bicameral system and the creation of a Senate, which almost exclusively represented the landowning classes (Platon 1985; Stanomir 2002: 89-90). Furthermore, in the installation of a constitutional monarchy and a foreign ruler, one could read both the demand of the Conservatives for a stable order and the preservation of a hierarchical society, and the Liberal stance as one of pragmatism[58] (cf. Docea 1997: 207).

[58] The Liberals perceived a foreign ruler as 'the best way to maintain a balance between "despotism" and "anarchy"', whereas the Conservatives rather hoped that it would keep liberal radicalism in check (Hitchins 1994: 12-3). Ion C. Brătianu, the leader of the Liberals, expressed the Liberals' viewpoint as follows: 'Gentlemen, you cannot want anything else than a constitutional monarchy; as long as Europe

The bicameral system outlined in the Constitution 'tended to reflect the prevailing forces in the country' (Janos 1978: 85). Participation in parliamentary institutions was based on property and educational qualifications. This meant that in reality the traditional upper classes continued to dominate the political arena. The electoral system of four colleges highly favoured the traditional nobility and to a lesser extent the new propertied and professional classes: the first college was made up out of the largest landowners; the second of owners of medium-sized estates; the third of industrial and commercial entrepeneurs, urban property-owners and professionals; and the fourth of the rest of the (mostly rural) population, which could only vote indirectly (Iacob 1995: 226; Janos 1978: 85). The propertied (and educated) classes constituted the overwhelming majority, whereas the minority position of the fourth college was even further undermined by electoral manipulation at the local level. In 1884, the electoral system was reformed, in a merger of the first and second colleges, entailing an effective preponderance of the 'urban, professional and official class', and placing the 'main weight of an extremely narrow franchise in an overwhelmingly agricultural country' on those classes (Seton-Watson 1934: 357). This reform shifted the balance from the traditional to the new professional and middle classes. Moreover, as referred to earlier, the prevalence of the dominant, but extremely narrow group of social forces in the Romanian political arena was further underlined in the two-party system, in which only the Liberal and the Conservative Party could participate.

Although in reality political rule was in the hands of a narrow group of élites, formally the government and political institutions represented the Romanian nation at large. The nation was defined by both the Liberals and the Conservatives in ethno-cultural terms, which meant that citizenship was only to be provided to those who belonged to the historically formed Romanian nation, thereby excluding foreigners, most importantly the Jews. The latter had by the second half of the nineteenth century constituted a significant part of the urban population, especially in Moldavia, and represented an economic threat to the interests (defined as national interests) of the Romanians by dominating commercial professions. The objective of creating a state purely representative of the Romanian nation and the national interest was articulated in

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remains monarchist, we will do the same; when Europe will declare itself a Republic, we will also declare ourselves a Republic' (cited in: Docea 1997: 207).

the Constitution of 1866, in which Article 7 stipulated that 'only foreigners with the Christian religion can obtain naturalisation' (Iacob 1995: 227). The intention behind this article was to prevent the Jews (and other commercially active foreigners) from obtaining political and civil rights. The contents of this article were in keeping with the two principle objectives - defence of the national interest and national integration - of the Romanian political élites. The national interest, defined as the (economic) interest of ethnic Romanians, was furthered by emphasising both an image of the Other, the non-Romanian, and the myth of unity of the nation and therefore of a singular, collective identity protected by the state. International pressure, in particular in the form of the Congress of Berlin, eventually forced the Romanian political élites to change the article in favour of the emancipation of Jews and other foreigners by the omission of any religiously based citizenship. As the exclusivist reading of membership of the nation had been carried unanimously by the political forces in the country, the forced modification was experienced not only as an unjustified foreign intervention in local affairs, but also as an act detrimental to the national interest (cf. Barkey 2000; Seton-Watson 1934: 349; Volovici 1991). Paradoxically though, the modification meant full international recognition for Romanian independence, and therefore also strengthened collective autonomy (cf. Platon 1985: 81).

The predominance of collective autonomy as the main objective of modernisation was not only expressed in the great political weight given to the realisation of independence from external constraints, international recognition, and the protection of the national interest. Collective autonomy was also given priority in the internal relations between the state and civil society. In other words, individual liberty and representation, one of the key principles in West-European liberalism, was subordinated to collective self-determination exercised by the political élites. Although legal civic rights were guaranteed in the Constitution, in the actual institutionalisation of the state they only played a secondary role. As referred to above, the electoral system only allowed an indirect and insignificant vote for the majority of the population, i.e., the peasantry. At the same time, the state was organised on the basis of the centralised French political system, which in the Romanian context resulted in disproportionate political power of the centre (in Bucharest), with regional and local authorities strongly subordinated to the central bureaucracy, not only in budgetary matters but also in terms

of decision-making. Public participation in political affairs was in this way effectively discouraged (Hitchins 1994: 95-6). The tendency towards bureaucratic centralisation increased during the decade of almost authoritarian rule by Ion C. Brătianu, in the period 1878-88, in which the leader of the Liberal party increasingly concentrated political power in his own hands, alienating radical Liberals in the party (Hitchins 1994: 96; Seton-Watson 1934: 354-5).

Socio-economic structures

In the project of modernisation advocated by the Romanian Liberals, political autonomy could not be separated from autonomy in the economy, i.e., the creation of a local space of autonomy in which the Romanian state would independently make decisions, and the creation of a viable national economy. Before 1859, one could speak of a combined effort of the Liberal and Conservative forces to enhance local autonomy in economic matters, in particular in the sphere of tariff policies, which were of primary importance for the revenues of the ruling élites and the emerging state. After the unification of the Romanian principalities, the consolidation of the state and formal independence in economic policy-making (1878), the primary objective became the construction of the national economy. This was the object of intense disputes between the Liberals and Conservatives, especially in terms of what the nature of state involvement and intervention in the economy should be and what relation the Romanian economy should have to the international economy. In both periods - before and after formal independence - the priority in efforts of economic modernisation was the realisation of autonomy and independence from foreign interference. The Liberal Party dominated politics from the mid-1870s onwards and introduced a Listian protectionist policy, primarily aimed at creating and supporting national industry. This policy can be read as the expression of a 'nationalising state'[59] (Brubaker 1996) or 'reconquista' (Platon 1985; see also Stokes 1997) which was to last until the 1930s. In the Liberal interpretation, political autonomy also took the form of the creation and defence of a native middle

[59] Brubakers understands 'nationalising nationalism' as involving 'the claims made in the name of a "core nation" or nationality, defined in ethnocultural terms, and sharply distinguished from the citizenry as a whole. The core nation is understood as the legitimate "owner" of the state, which is conceived as the state *of* and *for* the core nation' (Brubaker 1996: 5).

class, to the detriment of foreign influence in the national economy. The middle class was indeed the main object of the constitutional change in 1884, in which the four colleges of the parliament were reduced to three. This reform led to an increase in the franchise, but only a modest one. In this way, the political influence of industrial and banking classes would be increased without diluting its influence by giving 'voice' to a larger part of the population (Hitchins 1994: 101-2).

In the formative years of the Romanian nation-state (1821-1859), various efforts were undertaken to liberate the local economies from, first of all, the influence of the Ottoman empire, which had traditionally dominated the external economic affairs of the Principalities, and later Russia and the 'protecting' powers of Western Europe. By laying down the acquired freedoms in treaties and legal documents, the political élites sought to institutionalise an increasing independence from foreign interference. As referred to above, the Treaty of Adrianople and the Organic Regulations formed a significant step forward in this sense.[60] The first allowed for a limited freedom of commerce in the Romanian Principalities, whereas the latter provided for a limited right of decision in external tariff adjustments as well as the abolishment of privileges for the Ottoman empire (Antonescu 1915: 2-3; Zeletin 1925: 37)[61]. A further advancement towards national economic autonomy came in the shape of the Convention of Paris (1858), in which freedom of commerce, legislation and navigation of the Danube were once again underlined. Yet the Romanian principalities remained dependent on the Ottoman empire in external tariff policies (Antonescu 1915: 5). Only in the 1870s did the Romanian government managed to conclude its first direct trade treaty with Austria-Hungary, thereby instituting its formal capacity to conclude autonomous treaties vis-à-vis other states.

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[60] The Organic Regulations also formed the beginning of increased administrative unification of the principalities. In its wake, further measures towards the abolishment of local barriers were taken, such as the cancellation of local tolls and tariffs between Moldavia and Muntenia, effected in 1849 and 1856, and the first modern commercial codes, adopted in 1840 and 1864, in Moldavia and Muntenia respectively. These codes were set up after the French example of 1807, only to be replaced by the national code in 1887 (Postolache 1991: 45).

[61] Zeletin regards the economic opening up of the Romanian principalities as the moment in which the Romanian principalities were subordinated to Western capitalism, destroying the old feudal regime and resulting in the domination of the bourgoisie (1925: 37-8).

The combined efforts of the Romanian political élites to create a national space of autonomy opened the way to an intimately linked, but much more contentious question, i.e., the creation of a viable national economy. A local space for autonomy could in reality only hold a substantial meaning if the élites could exert this independence on a substantive basis. In other words, Romanian emancipation from external interference and liberty of political action would only really be meaningful if Romania held the actual means to bring to bear its voice. On the question of how to achieve such substantive emancipation the political forces were bitterly divided. The Liberals strongly advocated the creation of a national capitalist economy on the basis of Western industrialised societies, whereas the Conservatives were more concerned with preserving as much as possible of the old social structures and therefore promulgated a capitalist economy based on the rural traditions of the country. As the Liberals dominated the political arena, most visibly in the decade 1878-88, but in reality until far into the 1930s, their conception of modernisation in the form of a 'nationalising state' (Brubaker 1996) crucially shaped the emerging national economy. At the same time though, Conservative efforts did inform (and alter) this main trend.

Liberal efforts to achieve a substantive form of emancipation revealed themselves most conspicuously in their continuous struggle to indigenise the economy. As mentioned above, Article 7 of the Constitution, which formally prohibited the extension of civil rights on the basis of religion, was in reality an attempt to reclaim commercial enterprise for native Romanians and prevent the exploitation of Romanians by foreigners (cf. Seton-Watson 1934: 349). The Liberals sought to nationalise the economy and subsequently to protect native economic activity in many ways. In particular under the quasi-authoritarian rule of Ion C. Brătianu (1878-88), the protection and promotion of native industry became a crucial element of economic policy-making, which in itself had a lasting impact on the relation of the state to the economy.

After the negative experiences of the various commercial treaties that Romania had concluded with foreign states (beginning with the treaty with Austria-Hungary in 1876, see Antonescu 1915), the Liberals introduced a protectionist, import-substitution policy in the mid-1880s. In the international context of increasing competition from the United States (in the export of wheat, at the time Romania's major export item) and a strong tendency towards protectionism in Western Europe, the Liberals could pursue their

project of modernisation on the basis of partial isolation from the world market while at the same time emulating the Western industrial model. In this they followed the model offered by the economist A.D. Xenopol who advocated the creation of a Romanian heavy industry, whereas his main adversary, the Liberal economist Petre Aurelian, thought it best to promote smaller cottage industries and trades (Welzk 1982a: 48).

The Liberal policies during the 1880s were based on two instruments of state intervention: the promotion of native industry and the implementation of protectionist tariffs on a range of native products. In this way, the state became increasingly intertwined with the economy, as its revenues depended on the economic performance of national industry, whilst industry depended on advantages secured by the state. State interventionism would last until the 1930s, even if the Conservatives, and later, in the 1920s, the National Peasant Party would slacken this trend. Intervention explicitly aimed at the promotion of native industry, in that enterprises eligible for tax reductions, tariff exemptions, and further advantages were required to be manned in significant measure by native Romanians, and later also to be headed by a Romanian.[62] The Liberal policy of 'Romanianisation' or indigenisation in the 1920s and 1930s continued the project of creating a native industry, to the detriment of foreign enterprise.[63] Additionally, the 'nostrification' of industry led to a further entanglement of state and economy. In the 1920s, the general advantages offered to native industry - tax exemptions, discounts in transportation, direct subsidies - were complemented by the provision of long-term credits under favourable conditions (Hitchins 1994: 367; Welzk 1982a: 98-9). In the wake of the Great Depression, which had far-reaching implications

[62] The first requirement was part of the law for the promotion of industry issued in 1886, which stipulated that, after five years, eligible companies needed to have a labour force consisting of two-thirds of Romanian citizens (Antonescu 1915: 107). The second requirement came to the fore in the 1920s in the policies of 'Romanisation', in which the Liberals not only sought to acquire a majority of the shares in enterprises controlled by foreigners, but also stipulated that the director should be Romanian, or, in case of a larger management, at least one third should consist of Romanian citizens (Welzk 1982*a*: 85).

[63] A particular case regarded the extraction of the country's mineral resources. In the Constitution of 1923, all mineral sources were declared state property, although existing concessions were maintained. The stipulation eventually had to be repealed in 1928, under strong foreign pressure (Welzk 1982*a*: 88-9).

for of production and price levels, the economic policies of the Liberals took a qualitative turn. Before, the state had had a mainly supporting role vis-à-vis industry, and a contextual one in creating favourable conditions. From the early 1930s onwards, a veritable 'etatisation' of the economy took place, which meant that the state participated directly in the economy and was given a strongly regulative and dominating role. By means of an active cartellisation (and therefore an ever-increasing direct role of the state in investment decisions and regulation of the economy), the Liberals attempted to maintain control of the pattern of industrialisation as well as of existing native industry.

5. The crisis of liberalism and the fascist alternative

5.1 Liberalism and its discontents

In the context of a profoundly changed geo-political, territorial and socio-economic landscape, the interwar years saw the continuation of the Liberal nationalist project of modernisation. Immediately after the First World War, the political situation was confused and governments of different outlook alternated with high frequency. From 1922 onwards, however, the Liberal party managed to regain a firm hold of political power, which it maintained until 1937. Despite major continuations in the Liberal nationalist project, significant modifications and adaptations were made by the Liberals in tune with the radically changed circumstances. Structural changes in the wake of the war had a profound impact on the Liberal project and on Romanian politics in general. These included the enlargement of the Romanian nation-state in 1918 into the 'Greater Romania' state (which comprised the new territories of Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Transylvania), the extensive land reforms of 1917-19, and the extension of voting rights to the male population. The immediate result of this was a bundle of political tensions that may be summarised in the following four tendencies: firstly, inter-ethnic problems became a heated issue of debate as the three newly incorporated territories contained much larger minorities than the Old Kingdom (Wallachia and Moldavia) and thus paradoxically the realisation of Greater Romania brought with it the relative reduction of the Romanian 'element' within the larger territory (cf. Livezeanu 1995). Secondly, inter-regional tensions arose between the central Bucharest-based government and administration, and local ruling élites of the new territories. Thirdly, an inter-generational struggle between the older Liberal élites and a 'new generation' of politically conscious students, an unintended consequence of the massive extension of the education system in the 1920s and 1930s. The youth movement, heavily opposed to the older generation's vision of society, empowered itself by drawing on both domestically developed critiques of the Liberal project and by leaning on the interwar cultural currents of 'cultural pessimism' and revolutionary fascism in Europe. Fourthly, the urban-rural divide continued to provide one of the key points of contention as the

disproportionate emphasis of the Liberal economic programme on industrialisation and the necessity of creating an urban middle class did not remain without reaction in the largely rural economy. The urban-rural divide was abated somewhat by the large-scale land reforms in the early 1920s, but simultaneously exacerbated by the inclusion of the overwhelmingly rural male population in the government of the polity via the extension of male suffrage. The political inclusion of the latter meant that discursive representations of rural marginalisation stood a much larger chance in the political arena than in the pre-war era.

The whole gamut of political, ethnic and socio-economic tensions influenced the Liberal project decisively. Throughout the 1920s, the Liberals still represented the most powerful political élite, especially since the Conservative landed élites lost most of their economic and political influence after the great land reforms following the First World War (Welzk 1982a: 69-70). The relatively large-scale agrarian reforms – although hardly serving the needs of the peasantry as a whole (Turnock 1970: 542) – undermined the socio-economic basis of the land-owning class, and simultaneously any legitimate basis for its political status. Indeed, the issue of land reforms had been a major factor in dividing the party since the 1880s, and the land reform of the 1920s - complemented by the divided nature of the party (in a Conservative democratic and a progressive faction, Roberts 1951: 91) and 'Germanophile' leanings during the war - meant the end of the major political role of the Conservatives in Romanian politics (Brown 1979: 457; Livezeanu 1990: 219).

From their rise to political power in the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, but most clearly in the interwar period, the Liberals increasingly performed the conservative role of maintaining the status quo and defending the establishment (Brown 1982: 291; Platon 1985). The Liberal current showed clear tendencies towards authoritarian solutions for realising their project (see Preda 1998) and in this sense it changed – contextually as well as substantively speaking – into a conservative project, seeking to continue the original project of modernisation by accentuating (temporary) authoritarian solutions for its realisation. Both the defence of the status quo and the 'neoliberal' outlook fed into the growing importance of the state.

It was this image of the Liberal project of modernisation, a subversive and innovative project increasingly turned étatist and conservative, that was the focus of critical and

radically different interpretations - in particular revolutionary fascist ones - of modernisation. Changed circumstances allowed these critiques to arise, resonate and mobilise considerable parts of the population. The right-wing, fascist critique took the form of a cultural critique, which took issue both with the institutionalised form of liberalism (in democratic and statist structures) and its political doctrine as such. One of the peculiarities of interwar Romania is that revolutionary leftism constituted a minor and even negligible factor in the political landscape. Conflicts over modernisation were therefore dominated by liberal, conservative and radical fascist interpretations (cf. Banac and Verdery 1995).

In this chapter, I will first identify the formation and consolidation of alternative political movements. Subsequently, I will analyse the continued institutionalisation of liberalism in the interwar period. This account of the institutional underpinnings of the Liberal project performs a different role than in the previous chapter, where the institutional picture mainly served to indicate the general, structural changes that the Liberal project brought about. In this chapter, as well as serving this purpose, such a picture will reveal continuity and rupture with the pre-war period and show which institutions were the immediate reference points for a culturalist-spiritualist critique.

5.2 Modernising agency: political 'voice' and modernisation 'from below'[64]

After the First World War, the Liberals largely represented by the ethnic Romanian financial and industrial classes from *Vechiul Regat* or the Old Kingdom. In addition, the Liberals provided most of the members of the state-bureaucracy and the governments in the 1920 and 1930s. The Liberals' position as the ruling political and economic élite of

[64] I will focus on those political actors that had a structural influence on the direction and substance of Romanian modernisation. I will not discuss political forces that played only a transitory role, such as General Averescu's Popular Party (*Partidul Poporului*) in the early and middle 1920s. In the interwar period, three main political forces can be identified: the National Liberal Party, the National Peasant Party, and the fascist Iron Guard. The National Liberal Party dominated the political scene when in office from 1922 to 1928, and from 1933 to 1937. Their periods of government were interrupted by a period of rule of the National Peasant Party (1928-1931), the technocratic government headed by the historian Nicolae Iorga (1931-32), and once again the National Peasant Party (1932-33).

an enlarged Romania increasingly came under pressure despite their attempts to integrate Greater Romania through centralisation and 'Romanianisation'. After the interruption of the First World War, the Liberals resumed the modernising project they had initiated in the nineteenth century. This 'original' modernising project was, however, increasingly subject to severe criticism and opposition stemming from political actors that interpreted the Romanian project in a radically different way.

The political field changed rather drastically in the interwar period, as the position of the Liberal Party shifted from the role of emancipator and unifier of the Romanian nation to that of conservative guardian of the status quo. Newly emerged political actors - representing the recently politically emancipated peasant majority - now took up the role of opposition to the Liberal Party. Despite the prominence of the Liberal Party in governance, its political legitimacy eroded steadily as a result of internal political problems[65] and a growing critique on the Liberals' allegedly corrupt nature and inadequate representation of the whole nation.[66] The governing party was perceived as following narrowly defined class interests and therefore its predominantly economic nationalism as a betrayal of the interests of the ethnic majority. In addition, despite large-scale agrarian reforms in 1921, the Liberals proved incapable of structurally improving the socio-economic position of the majority of the population, the peasantry. Although the extensive land reforms of the early twenties did meet part of the social or 'peasant question' - the demand for ownership of land - it left unresolved the economic problems of production and efficiency[67], and therefore failed to confront the precarious socio-economic position of the peasantry. The Liberal élite could indeed legitimately be

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[65] In particular the death of leader Ion I. C. Brătianu in 1927 created a crisis of leadership and direction (Roberts 1951: 106-7).

[66] As Roberts remarks: 'Although the National Liberal Party was pleased to trace its origins to the group of young Rumanian intellectuals who had been inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution of 1848, the temper of the Brătianu party in the 1920's bore a far greater resemblance to the rigid and narrowly conceived liberalism of Guizot in the latter years of the July monarchy. In both cases there was the same curious combination of a not unimpressive austerity with the crassest manifestations of the spirit of "enrichissez-vous" (Roberts 1951: 108).

[67] Janos claims that the reforms even had 'disastrous long-run implications for the entire national economy', because of severe decreases in crop yields, decreasing exports and increasing domestic consumption (Janos 1978: 103).

subjected to the critique of systematic political negligence of a major part of the population. The continuing socio-economic problems of the enlarged Romanian state, in combined with the alleged self-interest of its political class and the wild growth of the bureaucratic state system made the political élites and the political system extremely vulnerable to this critique, all the more so when the effects of Great Depression in 1929 were felt in the Romanian lands (see Heinen 1986: 48, 52-3).

The main alternative political forces of the period can be distinguished on the basis of their positions vis-à-vis the political system. The democratic political forces, most importantly the regional and peasantist parties, both criticised the 'original' modernising project for its negligence of the peasantry and its inadequacy in representing the authentic nation, but generally endorsed the legal and constitutional nature of the existing political system (cf. Perie 1998: 86-7). These counter-currents represented the political force of the peasantry unleashed in the 1920s and 1930s and formulated a relatively moderate critique of the Liberals' Western model, based on pre-war peasantist/populist strands of thought, strands which had in themselves grown out of organicist, evolutionary critiques on Liberalism. The common denominator among the peasantist parties was the representation of the peasantry and the rejection of the Liberals' protectionist and industrialist model. In general, however, their critique remained within the parameters of the political system. The nationalist parties that had emerged in the early twentieth century, who continued to political manifest themselves in the 1920s, similarly criticised the Liberals for their inadequate defence of the nation and identified the nation with the peasant masses and rural traditions. Their conception of national regeneration was predominantly expressed through anti-Semitism, i.e., the protection of 'the economic, political, and cultural interests of the Rumanians against the Jews by all legal means' (Hitchins 1994: 403). In this, they remained largely within the existing political framework, in contrast to the radical, fascist groups which emerged among the university youth in the early 1920s and which strongly rejected liberal democracy as a political system. The fascist movement mostly operated outside or on the margins of the formal political arena, was organised in a hierarchical and paramilitary movement rather than in a democratic political party, and promulgated as its main objective the overthrow of the existing system. Anti-systemic thought was not

only professed by politically organised social groups that resorted to (often violent) political action but was also endorsed on a purely discursive, intellectual level by a group of young intellectuals. The initially distinct movements - political and intellectual – collaborated openly from the early 1930s onwards.

1. Populism[68]. The political significance of the most immediate alternative to the Liberal project of modernisation - a form of populism - was based on two factors: the political mobilisation of the peasantry and the formulation of an economic critique. The National Peasant Party (*Partidul Național Țărănesc*) which came into being in 1926 comprised both these elements. Its attention to the peasant question and its direct representation of the peasant class made it a significant force after the two-fold change of the extension of voting rights and the wide-scale land reforms. The implementation of universal male suffrage, meant to extend the political nation to the peasantry[69] and resulting from the desire of the incumbent political élites to prevent any 'Bolshevik' contagion among the masses (Heinen 1986: 102; Seton-Watson 1934: 552), resulted in two structural changes. First of all, it gave political 'voice' to the peasantry, turning political mobilisation of the masses into a significant element of politics. Secondly, the political representation of the peasantry empowered those political forces that promulgated an alternative to the Liberal vision of modernisation.

The National Peasant Party emerged from the fusion of two regional political parties. The Peasant Party (*Partidul Țărănesc*) had been established in the Old Kingdom in 1918 and originally promulgated a rather radical ideology of populism[70] and revolutionary class struggle. In 1926 the Peasant Party united with the National Party of Transylvania (*Partidul Național*), which was organised around the ethnic Romanian minority of Transylvania under the Austro-Hungarian empire (the party was established in 1888). The latter's original doctrine was based on emancipation of the Romanians and

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[68] Populism refers here to those political movements that emerged around the turn of the twentieth century in Russia and Eastern Europe and sought to directly represent the popular (peasant) masses by striving for reforms to better the masses' situation.

[69] In 1930, the Romanian population was 80 percent rural, whereas only 20.2 percent lived in urban areas (Livezeanu 1995: 8-10).

[70] The original peasantist doctrine was strongly based on Constantin Stere's populist ideas (Perie 1998: 113; see chapter 7).

unification with the Old Kingdom. The fusion resulted in the National Peasant Party (*Partidul Național Țărănesc*), which created a political party operating on the national level, and promulgated a discourse of social harmony and a rurally based economy, while remaining within the horizon of the democratic system. The National Peasant Party assumed government in the period of 1928-30, underlining the rapidly changed power differential in Romanian politics after the extension of the franchise. Notwithstanding its electoral base (the main support came from peasants from the Old Kingdom), the party élite itself was mainly constituted by members of social groups other than the peasantry, such as urban intellectuals, the local bourgeoisie, and 'heads of popular banks and village cooperatives' (Hitchins 1994: 391-2; see also Heinen 1986: 104). Despite the party's formal representation of the major part of the population, the peasantry, its more emancipatory outlook and thus its more inclusive character, it still failed to effectively solve structural economic and politics problems (Livezeanu 1995: 24). In the context of the world economic crisis and the declining status of democracy and its political programme, liberalism, the failure of the National Peasant Party in finding an enduring solution or 'third way' to the country's problems contributed to clearing the way for authoritarian and fascist solutions.

2. The nationalist movements. The most important exponents of what might be called nineteenth-century nationalism or 'traditional' nationalism (see below), which formed a critique on the power of the Liberals in the interwar period, were A.C. Cuza and Nicolae Iorga. Both had studied at the university of Iași, had been influenced by the organicist critique of the Junimists and represented the traditional nationalism of the ideologues of the last quarter of the nineteenth century (another important figure was the national poet Mihail Eminescu) (see chapter 11). Cuza, in his position as professor of economics in Iași, and Iorga, as a prominent historian at the university of Bucharest, 'provided the synthesis of Eminescu's xenophobia and the nativism of *Junimea*' (Niessen 1995: 281). Both Cuza and Iorga were involved in the foundation of the Universal Antisemitic League and, in 1910, founded the Democratic Nationalist Party, which had an explicitly nationalist and anti-semitic programme. According to Volovici, these organisations had relatively little influence on interwar political life. Nevertheless, '[t]he spread of antisemitism was visible in intellectual and cultural circles, but more pronounced among the middle classes and "intellectual proletariat" [i.e., a university educated youth

that could not find a place in the state bureaucracy, PB]; these sectors lacked "cultural capital" and were eager to acquire prestige and social position' (Volovici 1991: 18-19)[71].

Cuza, along with Iorga, formed part of a group of 'veterans' for whom antisemitism formed an integral part of their nationalist political programmes. Cuza, in his capacity as university professor and as politician, played a crucial role in the articulation and diffusion of an exclusionary and ethnicity-based nationalism. In addition to the Democratic National Party, Cuza later established the Guard of National Awareness (1919), the League of National Christian Defence (LANC, in 1923), and the National Christian Party (together with the nationalist and anti-semitic poet Octavian Goga, in 1935). Iorga, one of the most important Romanian historians, contributed to nationalist ideology mostly through his understanding of the nation as the embodiment of the Romanian soul[72], comparable to the romanticist tendencies in German nationalism. Iorga's myth of 'national regeneration' was based on 'the cultural and political promotion of the traditional values of Romanian rural life, opposition to modernization and, in different periods, varying degrees of xenophobia'[73] (Volovici 1991: 31). The role of Cuza, Iorga and other intellectuals in the spread of a nationalism that was demarcated by strong antisemitic overtones and a mythical perception of the nation underlines the significant and autonomous role of intellectuals in formulating political discourses in Romanian interwar society (cf. Volovici 1991: 31). Nevertheless, the traditional nationalist movement remained largely an intellectual phenomenon confined to the élite level and with little political influence, in contrast to the radical fascist movements which actively mobilised the masses (cf. Heinen 1986: 94).

3. Fascism. The radical, 'new' nationalism that emerged in the interwar period and formed an important part of the ideology of the fascist movement elaborated on the

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[71]Volovici depicts Cuza as 'the perfect illustration of the mediocre intellectual who made a remarkable scientific and political career based exclusively on the promotion of a program to combat the "Jewish threat" (1991: 23).

[72] Iorga equation of the authentic nation with the peasantry came clearly through in his historical work (see, for instance, Iorga 1971).

[73] Iorga eventually renounced his anti-Semitic sentiments, which contributed to a break with Cuza, who persisted in his radically anti-Jewish outlook (Heinen 1986: 107-8).

same themes as its nationalist predecessors. A collectivist and ethnic-cultural conception of the nation and a virulent anti-Semitism formed the main part of the fascist programme. The crucial distinction between 'new' nationalism and its traditionalist predecessor was its anti-systemic character, which comprised a comprehensive critique of democracy, individualism, and rationalism. In practice, this meant that it rejected democracy as a political system, liberalism as a political doctrine, and the West as a model to follow.

The radical repudiation of the Western model found its most immediate supporters amongst university students in the rapidly expanding university system of the early 1920s[74], an educational system that was unable to cater for its immensely growing clientele.[75] This situation was at its most evident in the new regions of Greater Romania (in particular in Bessarabia and Bukovina), but also in Moldavia, where minority, especially Jewish students formed a significant portion of the student population. The right-wing student movement could partially be understood as a struggle for social positions in that it emerged in the early 1920s as an agitation against minority students, who were depicted as competing for scarce resources in an overcrowded university.[76] At the same time, and intimately related to their anti-minority and anti-Semitic attitude but beyond the direct social struggle, the right-wing student movements strongly opposed

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[74] For an extensive treatment of the cultural policies in interwar Romania, see Livezeanu 1995. As she observes: 'The dramatic growth in the university body, the conditions of overcrowding due to scarce resources and to inadequate growth in faculty and facilities of all kinds, and the persistence of ethnic minorities in the universities informed the protracted debate in interwar Romania over the purported excess of university graduates, the ethnic make-up of Romania's intellectual élite, and the unfair competition Romanian students and graduates might face from "foreigners"' (Livezeanu 1995: 240).

[75] The number of university students grew from 0.1 percent in 1914 to 0.2 percent of the general population in 1930, representing an increase of 200 percent (Livezeanu 1995: 240; Janos 1978: 108), although compared to Western Europe numbers these figures were relatively insignificant (Janos 1989: 354).

[76] This was expressed in the demand for a numerus clausus for the admission of Jewish students. For accounts of these political struggles within the universities by the main leaders of the Fascist movement, see Codreanu 1974 and Moţa 1978. The demand for a numerus clausus for Jewish students could also be found elsewhere in Europe (for instance in neighbouring Hungary, see Ambri 1980: 72).

emerging communist sentiments and the existing political establishment. In addition, the 'generation of 1922' criticised the older generation for not dealing effectively with the social problems it perceived. The fascist movement was headed by the charismatic Corneliu Zelea Codreanu[77] and organised in a strictly hierarchical and almost paramilitary manner, and in 1927 formed the 'Legion of the Archangel Michael', which from the 1930 onwards was also referred to as the 'Iron Guard' (*Garda de Fier*).[78] From the early 1930s onwards the fascist movement increasingly participated in political life through its legal, political wing, which entered the elections in 1932 as the 'C.Z. Codreanu Group' and was renamed in 1935 as the All for the Fatherland Party (*Partidul Totul pentru Ţară*).

The fascist movement in its manifestation as a political movement converged during the 1930s with an intellectual movement, the 'young generation' or 'generation of 1927', which had similarly emerged in the university environment in the 1920s, but had confined itself to intellectual manifestations. The spiritual mentor of this so-called 'young generation' was Nae Ionescu, a philosophy professor educated in Germany, who had an enormous influence on the young generation of intellectuals[79] (among which the young Mircea Eliade, Eugen Ionescu, Emil Cioran, and Constantin Noica). Nae Ionescu's main influence was to be found in his ideas about the reassertion of the prominence of religion – Romanian Orthodox Christianity – and the primacy of the spiritual in society. Ionescu aired his opinions mainly through his university lectures, where he had considerable influence over many young students and gained the status of

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[77] Codreanu (born in Iaşi in 1899) was the undisputed leader of the interwar student and Fascist movement. He was a follower of A.C. Cuza in the 1920s and founded with him the League of National Christian Defence, a nationalist and anti-semitic movement. In 1927, however, he found his own Legion of the Archangel Michael after disagreement with Cuza, which became the prime political force against the democratic political system.

[78] The organisational aspects of the Legion are elaborated in Codreanu's 'handbook' for the movement, *Carticică de Cuib* (Codreanu 1973).

[79] This generation's creed was based on 'the primacy of youth over old age – youth being equated with spiritual fervor, authenticity, creativity, idealism, while old age symbolized routine, inertia, political corruption, and petty materialism' (Calinescu 1993: 133). See for Nae Ionescu, Călinescu 1988; Ricketts 1988: 91-126; Mircea Eliade's entry in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (1967, London: MacMillan); Voicu 1998a and 1998*b*.

a sort of 'Romanian Socrates' (Calinescu 1993: 143). After 1933, Nae Ionescu and some of the members of the young generation began to openly support the Iron Guard (most prominently Mircea Eliade, Emil Cioran and later Constantin Noica. Other members of the young generation joined the extreme left, or oscillated between an apolitical and a democratic stance, Petreu 2003a; Tismăneanu and Pavel 1994: 433).

The young generation of intellectuals was formed in the late 1920s and became known through Mircea Eliade's *Itinerariu Spiritual*, published in Ionescu's newspaper *Cuvîntul*, and dealt with the upcoming spiritually-oriented generation of intellectuals (see Antonesei 1985: 190). In the period 1932-33, the generation was organised in the cultural association *Criterion*, which dealt with a vast range of cultural issues. In the early 1930s, one could still speak of a versatile group in which a wide range of opinions co-existed. From 1933, part of the young generation increasingly became politicised and moved towards the extreme right (Petreu 2003a). Nevertheless, even between those that supported the extreme right (Eliade, Noica, Cioran, Vulcănescu) a wide range of ideational differences existed, although the generation was defined by a consensus on the primacy of the spirit and contempt for liberal, bourgeois politics (Antonesei 1985; Simion 2000: 7-8).

The fascist movement's leader- and membership was thus composed of the youth and young intellectuals (cf. Barbu 1968, 1980; Heinen speaks of a 'Bildungsmittelstand', 1986: 389). The leaders of the movement came from lower-middle class backgrounds (sons of wealthier peasants, and of priests and teachers) (Barbu 1980; Ioanid 1990: 65-73; Weber 1966: 569). An important part of its success must be explained by its efforts to mobilise the peasantry (from the early 1930s onwards) and the 'victims' of the Liberal programme of modernisation in general (Livezeanu 1995: 287). The social basis of the fascist movement has been identified by most researchers with the lower middle classes or 'petty bourgeoisie', despite the lack of extensive evidence on membership.[80] As its members stemmed predominantly from those classes that did not share in

[80] According to the estimates of Barbu (1980: 390), Ioanid (1990: 65-72), Heinen (1986: 380-396), and Weber (1966), the cadres of the Fascist movement belonged mostly to an urban petty bourgeoisie and to the university student population.

political rule and were often made up of people who had only recently joined the middle classes, the fascist movement can be characterised as a movement from below.[81]

5.3 Continuation and disruption of the original pattern of modernisation

Institutional continuity and discontinuity in interwar Romania can be understood as the outcome of the interaction of and tension between two attitudes towards the political and economic institutional situation: a defensive and largely approving attitude towards the existing institutions by key political actors on the one hand, and a highly sceptical and sometimes revolutionary anti-systemic attitude of contending actors on the other. This interaction and tension influenced the institutional pattern by constraining the political behaviour of the continuously dominant Liberal Party, and eventually resulted in the undoing of its project of modernisation. I will look briefly into institutional continuity and change during the interwar period by analysing political institutions, i.e., elements of the new constitution, the enduring behaviour of the political élites, and economic institutions, primarily in terms of state-economy relations and economic governance. Political and economic institutions constituted both the core defence of the establishment parties and the focal point of the critique of emerging political actors.

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[81] An interesting parallel can be drawn between the position of the Liberal revolutionaries in the first half of the nineteenth century and the 'young generation' of the interbellum period. The Liberal revolutionaries opposed foreign interference and struggled for national autonomy. The intellectual elements in the revolutionary 1848-movement appropriated liberal and romanticist ideas with a view to bringing about collective autonomy. Their efforts of state and nation-building were indeed aimed at realising exactly that. Simultaneously, the development of state structures offered the intellectuals or the 'proletariat of the pen' as Ştefan Zeletin has called them, the opportunity of employment in the state and a considerable increase in status by governing the newly formed polity. The intellectuals of the 'young generation' that came to the fore in the interwar years as the discursively most important opponent of the Liberal modernising project displayed the same kind of anxiousness to bring about collective autonomy while simultaneously seeking to enhance their own status and social position, as their vertical mobility in state structures was increasingly blocked by an overcrowded state bureaucracy, designated in the label 'intellectual proletariat'. Where nineteenth century Liberal intellectuals drew their inspiration from revolutionary liberal ideas, the interwar intellectuals referred to contemporary cultural pessimism and neo-romanticism.

The institutional pattern underpinning the Liberal project of modernisation had in the nineteenth century been based on the conception of the state as the embodiment of national autonomy and the national interest (see chapter 4). In the wake of the First World War, the Liberal Party attempted to continue its original project, but also had to adapt to radically changed circumstances. The Liberal strategy in the interwar period can be characterised by two trends, articulated in both institutional continuity and change. On the one hand, the Liberals continued the original project of modernisation, including its idiosyncracies, discernible in the centralised and unitary conception of the state, and a rather élitist conception of politics and political representation (pursued in the novel circumstances of an enlarged state). The Liberal project showed increasingly authoritarian tendencies during the 1930s as a reaction to perceived political instability and contestation. On the other hand, and in tension with their desire to remain in power, the Liberals realised one of the classical tenets of liberalism - universal suffrage – immediately following the war. The latter can be understood as a result of immediate pressure - the revolutionary tensions created by the Russian Revolution and its influence on the Romanian masses - and of a change in the overall attitude of the Liberal élite vis-à-vis the political question of representation since 1914. In an immediate sense, the extension of the franchise signified the at least formal inclusion of the masses in politics. In a structural sense, it opened a political space for the contestation of existing arrangements, in the sense that the élitist discursive monopoly on the conception of the 'nation' and the common good, as had been exercised before the war by the Liberals and the Conservatives, could now be legitimately challenged by a whole range of different interpretations and representations of the same people or of hitherto excluded groups.[82] The proliferation of new ideas and actors constituted an unintended consequence of the extension of suffrage and went beyond the original intentions of the Liberals.

Political institutions

The new constitution of 1923 comprised elements of both continuity and change. Emphases on national autonomy and a centralist attitude towards politics could be read in the first three articles of the new constitution, in which it was stated that the

[82] That this was the case was visible in the veritable 'explosion' in the number of political parties during the interwar period (see Iacob 1995: 265-7).

Romanian kingdom was 'a unitary and indivisible state', that its territory was inalienable, and that it was not to be colonised by any foreign people (Iacob 1995: 268; Roberts 1951: 98). In terms of the state's relations with society, it was stated that all powers derived from the people, which could only exercise its rights by means of delegation. Regarding local autonomy, the constitution contained provisions that ensured central state control over local councils (Roberts 1951: 99; Helin 1967: 488). At the same time, the constitution embodied a 'civic' notion of citizenship, in which the concept of the Romanian citizen was defined explicitly without recourse to ethnicity, language, or religion, elements which were in turn explicitly denied as impediments for the acquisition and exercise of political and civil rights (Article 7, Iacob 1995: 269). The constitution hinged on a dual, and therefore potentially tense, logic, i.e., the continued centralised political rule of the élites in concomitance with the formal, legal representation of the larger population (cf. Stanomir 2002: 94).

The élitist element was indeed visible in the continuation of institutionalised political practices that worked to the detriment of the full exercise of political rights. In particular, the electoral law of 1926 was an expression of the continuing élitist nature of Romanian government, in that it established that a political party which managed to obtain 40 percent or more of the votes would be awarded with the so-called 'electoral premium' (*primă electorală*), which in practice guaranteed 70 percent or more of the total votes (Iacob 1995: 265). The intention behind the law was to create stability in Romanian political life, but it clearly also favoured larger parties with an established constituency (read: the Liberal Party). In effect, the law permitted the survival of the informal rotational system of majority governments of pre-war politics, in that it created a stimulus for the merger of smaller, regional parties (as happened with the Peasant Party and the National Party of Transylvania), which in turn led to the recreation of a political system dominated by two large parties[83] (the Liberal Party and the National Peasant Party) (cf. Perie 1998: 77; see also Iacob 1995: 265, 267).

Liberal political practices aimed at top-down leverage by means of the centralisation of the administration, the nationalisation and homogenisation of society, the reduction of

[83] On this process of polarisation, see Shapiro 1981.

minorities' and regional actors' political influence, and the manipulation of democratic processes. Initially, the institutional changes that led to the decline of the political power of the conservative class, the ' "rise" of the masses' and their ' "entry" into the political mainstream' (Janos 1989: 351) seemed to strengthen the position of the Liberals as their traditional rivals no longer presented a political threat. The dominant position of the Liberal Party was strengthened by the political system, which in general favoured the incumbent party and gave the executive a preponderant position (Maner 2001). Moreover, in the early 1920s, the newcomers - the regional and peasant parties - were not yet sufficiently organised to pose any effective challenge, especially since their original programmatic points - land reforms and inclusion of the peasantry in politics – had been formally granted. However, in the longer term, the inclusion of large parts of the population in politics made the Liberals much more vulnerable to popular demands and gave a structural 'voice' to the hitherto excluded and the victims of earlier modernising policies. The Liberals, in some way incongruous with classical liberal tenets, reacted to assaults on their political dominance by fortifying their institutional strongholds. The clearest example of this is probably the Liberals' policy of centralisation, that was aimed simultaneously at subjecting the ethnically Romanian élites in the new territories to Bucharest authority while at the same time politically silencing the non-Romanian minorities in those new regions. Almost all the regions encompassed large ethnically Romanian élites, but at the same time a substantial number of non-Romanians, i.e., Magyars, Germans, Ukrainians, Ruthenians and others. The new territories had been belonged to different empires and therefore their local governments had been shaped by different administrative experiences.[84] The Liberals responded to this diversity by introducing strongly centralising administrative reforms, extending the highly centralised administration of the Old Kingdom and eliminating local autonomy by delegating authority in the regions to centrally nominated administrators (Hitchins 1994: 381). The ministeries performed their functions centrally without ceding autonomy to local administrative organs (Fischer-Galati 2000: 289).

Despite an interlude of government by the National Peasant Party (1928-1933), in which centralising measures were temporarily countered by democratisation and

[84] Bukovina was structured along Austrian patterns of administration, Bessarabia along Russian, and Transylvania along Hungarian (Helin 1967: 484).

decentralisation (not, however, in favour of the non-Romanian minorities), the trend of centralised government 'from above' set in by the Liberals in the 1920s did not halt. When the Liberals returned to power in 1933, authoritarian policies were drastically expanded and popular freedom curbed.[85] Indeed, in 1934 censorship measures were introduced and the administration governed by decree. Paradoxically, the Liberals themselves grew increasingly dependent on the monarch Carol II in the period 1933-37 (Georgescu 1991: 196; Hitchins 1994: 377-8).

While the authoritarian brand of liberalism in the 1930s could still be explained as a necessary defence of the original modernisation project, political developments in the last years of the 1930s actually meant the undoing of the Liberal project. The elections of December 1937 failed to produce the expected majority for the Liberal Party[86], and in its wake the monarch Carol II installed a royal dictatorship. The ultimate consequence of the political 'voice' of the people, who had by now indicated a considerable preference for the radical right (the right-wing parties together officially obtained onefourth of the votes), was not accepted. Instead of a regime based on popular sovereignty, a regime was installed to guarantee order and prevent the loss of any national sovereignty. The main institutional elements of the democratic system were dissolved, i.e., the 1923 constitution, the party system, the autonomy of the parliament, and the division of powers, whereas ample royal prerogatives were put in place (Giurescu 1974: 334-5; Nagy-Talavera 1970: 296). The Constitution of 1923 was

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[85] As the historian Vlad Georgescu writes: 'A long period of classic liberalism and civility in Romanian politics ended with the assassination of Prime Minister Ion G. Duca by members of the Iron Guard (Sinaia, December 1933)' (Georgescu 1991: 196). This is not to say that the reality of the democratic system had reflected the formal requirements in the 1920s. In those days too, political participation by the major part of the population was minimal, the parliament was primarily made up of urban middle classes and landowners, and was dominated by the government, elections were manipulated by the leading party (Heinen 1986: 52; Roberts 1951: 91, 96).

[86] *Totul Pentru Ţară*, the political extension of the Iron Guard, won 15.58 percent of the votes, the National Christian Party (a right-wing party led by Alexandru Cuza, the anti-semitic nationalist, and the poet Octavian Goga) 9.15 percent, and the National Peasant Party 20.40 percent, whereas the Liberal Party obtained only 35.92 percent, and thus fell short of reaching the 40 percent necessary for the 'electoral premium' (Giurescu 1974: 331-2; Nagy-Talavera 1970: 293-4).

substituted by the monarch with a corporatist constitution, in which citizenship rights were tied to labour activity rather than individual rights (Roberts 1951: 207). Later, in 1938, the Front of National Revival (*Frontul Renaşterii Naţionale*) was established as a 'single political organization in the state', headed by the monarch (Giurescu 1974: 336). The administrative structure of the country was altered significantly, the number of districts greatly reduced and put under the direct control of royal administrators, as a result of which local governing capacities were reduced to the minimum (Helin 1967: 492). Not only were the traditional parties deprived of effective political influence, but the Iron Guard violently suppressed and 13 of its leading members (including its leader Codreanu) assassinated. The corporatist state was later replaced by a self-proclaimed totalitarian regime, which needed to 'defend the political and totalitarian order of the Romanian State' (Giurescu 1974: 340). Ultimately, the dissolution of the Liberal project was completed by the substitution of the so-called 'National-Iron-Guardist State' for the 'Nation's Party' which had constituted the royalist regime.[87] In this way, the Fascist alternative to Liberal modernisation, however short-lived, found its institutional expression.

Economic structures

The pre-war Liberal project was equally continued in the domain of political economy. At the same time, the consequences of the First World War, the world economic crisis and the enlargement of the Romanian polity created significant pressures for the political élites.[88] In other words, the political élites were obliged to adapt their pre-war economic strategies to the new setting, although they proved to be highly consistent in continuing certain key policies. Continuity was particularly prominent in the Liberals'

[87] The monarch had to flee the country, as his position became untenable after a series of geo-political adversities that led to the annexations of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the Soviet Union, Southern Dobrogea to Bulgaria and Transylvania to Hungary. The successor, the 'National-Iron-Guardist State', was led by the authoritarian general Antonescu and the fascist Iron Guard.

[88] The Greater Romanian state had to deal with high inflation rates and a continuous depreciation of the leu (the national currency), a war debt of 6 billion francs, a potentially explosive situation as a result of social contradictions and revolutionary contagion (Berend and Ranky 1974: 182-8; Welzk 1982: 65-68). In addition, the Liberals deemed a major priority the homogenisation of the new regions and the Old Kingdom, and the promotion and rationalisation of industry (Turnock 1970).

attitude towards the economy. The role of the state was deemed all-important in the support and development of the enlarged national economy, especially in terms of national industry. With respect to the latter, the autochthonous bourgeoisie was the evident object of state economic policy. The Liberals continued the trend initiated in the 1880s, when they had shown their first inclinations towards Listian policies of protectionism (see chapter 4). Similarly, active policies of support for native industry to the detriment of foreign industry were sustained. In some ways, this policy was radicalised in the frame of the 'for ourselves' policy (*prin noi înşine*). This entailed the insistent promotion of Romanian interests within the national economy.[89] The indigenisation and centralisation policies of the Liberals were aimed foremost at sustaining the political power of the Liberals and the continuation of their modernising project; the first policy sought to drastically reduce the influence of foreigners in the Romanian economy (and thereby to increase the ethnic Romanian element and more particularly the ruling oligarchy) whereas the latter was directed both against minorities and local Romanian élites in the new regions (cf. Roberts 1951: 118). In addition, the policies were an attempt to respond to direct economic problems: the mono-cultural and unproductive nature of agriculture, an export-oriented industry owned mainly by foreigners, the extreme fall in prices for the main Romanian export goods of oil and wheat after 1929, and as such a deterioration of the terms of trade, the high foreign debt, the protectionist policies of West European states, and the lack of a national administrative structure (Welzk 1982a: 67, 120-1). In practice, Liberal policy entailed the structural discouragement of importing manufactured goods and the promotion of national industrial production, in particular in metallurgy and textiles. In this, the Liberals tended increasingly towards a policy of national autarchy. In particular after 1933[90], governments supported heavy industry, whereas in the 1920s the main

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[89] In the 1920s, the Liberal policy was defined by the slogan 'prin noi înşine' (for ourselves), that was explained as: 'the development of the country's wealth primarily by Romanian labour and initiative, and by Romanian capital' (as mentioned in the Liberals' economic program of 1921, in: Welzk 1982*a*: 63).

[90] As observed above, in the years 1928-1933 the Liberals lost political ground to the National Peasant Party. The peasantist government intended to abandon the nationalist economic policy by steering away from 'economic self-sufficiency' and was in favour of 'international economic co-operation', and of switching domestic economic policy from 'industrialism to agrarianism' (for a

objectives had been light industry and the commercial-banking sector (Postolache 1991: 101). A further instance of the Liberals' emphasis on the national interest had come to the fore in the constitution of 1923, in which it was stated that the country's natural resources constituted state property. Clearly against foreign interests, this stipulation, in concomitance with the nationalisation of foreign companies, produced strong foreign reactions[91] (Iacob 1995: 270). Ultimately, these 'autocentric' policies led to a greatly expanded state role in the economy and a high concentration of capital, structurally articulated in the intertwining of privileges, monopoly rights, cartel formations and all kinds of relations of interest between politics and the economy (Welzk 1982a: 133; Hitchins 1994: 360-1).[92] The state was the dominant actor in providing credits and investments, export and import licenses, and the protection of industry, leading to a formidable bureaucratic stake in the economy (Welzk 1982a: 130, 133).

As regarding the unification of the different territories within the Greater Romanian state, the Liberals confronted this political question by means of centralisation, homogenisation and diffusing the policies of the Old Kingdom to the new regions.[93]

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programmatic statement of the most important peasantist economist, see Madgearu 1929; also Hitchins 1994: 368-73). The National Peasant Party opened the doors for foreign capital ('porți deschise capitalului străin'), and tried to counter the financial and economic oligarchy of the Liberals (Hitchins 1994: 369). Nevertheless, the world economic crisis had a significant impact on agricultural countries such as Romania, and the peasantist government was not in a position to reverse the trend of étatism.

[91] The nationalisation policies as such had their legal underpinning in the postwar peace treaties and as early as 1919 Romania (Yugoslavia reacted in a similar way) had begun to prepare for the nationalisation of firms which were owned by Austrian, Hungarian, and German capitalists (Berend and Ranky 1974: 193). Although foreign firms tried to rescue their capital by transferring shares to French and Czechoslovakian banks, a considerable amount ended up in the hands of the nationalising élites (Berend and Ranky 1974: 196).

[92] The state held monopolies in salt and tobacco and owned metallurgical, munitions, textile, distilling and printing works (Turnock 1970: 544, fn10).

[93] The Liberals took as an explicit model for the 'unitary national state' an industrial state, with production, circulation and exchange as its central elements and with its economy synchronised with the Western European one (Saizu 1985: 165). In this sense, a strong and nationalised economy was deemed an essential underpinning for national sovereignty (as opposed to quasi-colonisation and monopolisation by foreign powers and capital).

Through these measures, the new territories were subjugated to the overall logic and objectives of the Liberal programme and were incorporated into the efforts towards creating a nationally controlled economy, emancipation from foreign interference, and the linking of national interest with interests of the bourgeoisie and large industrial enterprises.[94] The first step in unification was to renounce all legislation and to abolish all those political-administrative institutions in which foreign dependence was institutionalised. Subsequently, the constitution of 1923 (which included approximately 60 percent of the old constitution of 1866) was applied to the whole national territory (Postolache 1991: 97). The Liberal unification policies were not merely confined to the restructuring, reorientation and extension of transport, communications, the banking system and the like, but systematically favoured particular industries above others, most of all to the detriment of agriculture.

The Romanian Liberals reacted to the world economic crisis by following a policy of national autarchy, in particular through large-scale industrialisation, which should increase national independence from foreign influence as well as protect the Romanian economy from the vagaries of the world market. Political authority was increasingly concentrated and state control over the economy steadily increased. The one-sided Liberal policies, however, failed to lead to structural improvements, in particular with regard to the still overwhelmingly rurally based population. Socio-economic issues played indeed an important part in the electoral landslide in December 1937 (Hitchins 1994: 419), and indicated the failure of the Liberals in implementing their project. The royal dictatorship set up by Carol II in 1938 was a further signal of the profound crisis of liberalism. The monarch considered the options of liberal democracy as exhausted, in particular since the dominance of the Liberals seemed undermined by the increased significance of the political forces on the extreme right and the major democratic alternative, the National Peasant Party, had proved unable to resolve the political and economic problems (Heinen 1986: 358-9). The monarch's installation of an authoritarian regime constituted an answer to both the hollowing out of democracy and

[94] The redistribution of revenues created from agriculture, small production and consumption in favour of investment in industry was one of the outcomes of this priority, and sparked critiques of the Liberal industrialisation policies for being 'parasitic' (Postolache 1991: 101).

the imminent threat of a Fascist take-over. The royal dictatorship that was installed in 1938 and lasted until 1940 practically continued the economic policies pursued by the Liberals throughout the 1930s, i.e., a heavy emphasis on state intervention in support for industry. The royal dictatorship only superficially resembled a fascist or totalitarian regime, and in reality entailed a 'bureaucratic-corporatist' alternative to both liberal democracy and fascism (Heinen 1986: 365; Welzk 1982a: 137). The bureaucratic-corporatist state constituted a reaction to both the crisis of liberalism and to the revolutionary tendencies of the extreme right, and promulgated an anti-revolutionary conservative nationalism in its stead. At the same time, it underlined key elements of the systemic critique of the Fascists and contributed both in ideational and historical terms to the undoing of the Liberal project of modernisation. In the end, the royalist dictatorship itself gave way to an 'authentic' (but short-lived) Fascist regime.

6. The national Communist project

6.1 Communism in Romania

A century or so of attempts by native élites to banish foreign influence from Romania came to a temporary halt with the incorporation of Romania in the imperial project of the Soviet Union. The exhaustion of both the Liberal and the authoritarian/Fascist projects (the latter had been seriously compromised by its collaboration with and subordination to Nazi Germany) and the atrocities of the Second World War had left Romania disorganised and extremely vulnerable to outside interference (Jowitt 1971). The course of the Romanian experience with modernity was radically altered by the imposition of the Soviet model, but at the same time the emergence of significant continuities with the inter- and pre-war situations should be acknowledged.

It seems hard to deny that, firstly, Communism in Romania at first lacked a domestic social base, that is to say the Romanian Communist Party had not attracted a substantial following since its foundation in the early 1920s, and, secondly, as a movement it had been dominated by foreigners (Deletant 1999; Zamfir 1992: 121). The regime change in 1944 can then only be seen as an imposition or 'revolution from above' or 'from without', directly instigated by the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, '[e]ven if precisely the common structure was externally imposed in most of the relevant countries, ... it ha[d] become indigenous even in the historically modern settings' (Arato 1993: 134). As Feher *et al.* remarked in the early 1980s, it was 'not only that in these dependent countries there exist significant strata whose interests are now directly bound up with the continuous existence of the whole established institutional structure, but above all that this structure has become the framework within which the whole population articulates its plans, expectations and even its desires' (Feher *et al.* 1983: 41-2). Indeed, despite the initial over-arching role of the Soviet Union and its domination of domestic politics, over time a particular Romanian experience with communism emerged. On an ideational level, the Romanian pattern was characterised by a fusion of the specific Romanian understanding of the nation with Marxism-Leninism, resulting in a syncretic

national Communism. However, on the socio-economic level the party-state zealously upheld a Stalinist understanding of modernisation as the unlimited expansion of production, a pathological interpretation of the Soviet model, which was continued until the very end (unlike countries such as Hungary and Poland, and the Soviet Union itself).[95]

Concisely put, communist regimes were based on the Soviet model of a highly centralised Communist party, a coalescence of party and state, a nationalised economy organised – formally - on the principle of instrumental rationality and supervised by a rationalised bureaucracy, and an ideology based on Marxism-Leninism (cf. Crowther 1988: 2). Economic, political and ideological power were dominated by a ruling class (the uppermost echelons of the Communist Party), although the state bureaucracy played a considerable executive role and therefore represented a power base in its own right. Other than portraying the communist regimes or state-socialist countries as ultimately based on the hegemony of the ruling class and state bureaucracy, it seems important to underline that the ruling class itself was subject to continuous internal power struggles and therefore liable to change. These struggles mostly involved (apart from power struggles among individuals), the particular pathway societal change should follow and how specific pathways were to be linked to the past. In addition, the emphasis on rational-technical solutions to societal problems entailed the expansion of a relatively all-encompassing state bureaucracy and created a partial shift in power from upper to lower levels. Thirdly, the ideological dominance of the ruling class was continuously questioned by members of society other than members of the ruling élite, especially intellectuals, constraining the ruling class to continuously re-emphasise and reformulate its legitimacy.

[95] In the 1980s, this commitment - after many setbacks and economic crises - was still very much alive. For instance, Ceauşescu declared at the thirteenth party congress in 1984; that '[w]e have to bear in mind that we cannot weaken... the centralized management of the social economic activity based on the central plan' (cited in: Orescu 1985: 27).

6.2 Political agency in totalitarian Romania

Once a communist society is established, the societal logic of conflict and therefore of modernising agency changes. The state in totalitarian societies does not merely constitute the political sphere, but performs the role of an autonomous actor in its attempt to remove the distinction between the political and society. It can therefore be seen as 'invading' society. Paradoxically, this means that the possibility for societal actors to access politics becomes radically restricted, as the claim to absolute power and knowledge by the vanguard party denies the need for alternative visions and plural interests. If in democratic and constitutional systems the need for the representation of different interests is (at least formally) admitted (as the foundation of the political system on any substantive value is denied and only a temporal domination of particular interests on the political level is allowed), in totalitarian systems only one collective interest is allowed, of either class or racial/ethnic nature.

In the era in which the national Liberal project was dominant in Romania, political conflict evolved around the domination of the political arena, as well as around access to the state for the masses. Only those that could not perceive the democratic system as being capable of representing the masses in any meaningful way criticised the democratic state on the systemic level. In this way, Fascism effectively criticised the Liberal-nationalist project, but in its specific historical context was not able to institutionalise its counter-project to any great degree. The communist alternative in this sense followed the systemic critique of the Fascist project in that it denied any place for pluralism, as its political project evolved around the totalistic notions of unity, homogeneity and absolute knowledge.

After the exhaustion of the authoritarian and fascist projects of the interwar period, the externally imposed communist 'revolution from above' in Romania completed the discontinuation of the democratic system by imposing a 'total state', which held as a main objective the complete permeation of society; the subordination of society and its assimilation to the state logic was its 'systemic goal' (Arnason 1993: 108). The reconstruction of society involved the centralisation of political, economic, and ideological power in the Communist Party, which increasingly engulfed both state and societal spheres as it infiltrated society at large, undermining autonomous, alternative centres of power outside of the state. In order to complete its project, the Communist

party-state required an extensive bureaucratic organisation as well as the co-operation of intellectuals, therefore creating space for contention. In analysing communist society one needs to differentiate between the ruling élite (the upper level of the Party hierarchy, embodying the official vanguard), the state bureaucracy (which constituted an important node of control in economic planning and political domination of society), and intellectuals.[96] In Romania, it was above all the relationship between the first and the third of these that eventually defined the structure and contents of the modernising project.[97]

In sum, in modern societies contestation and conflict around worldviews and visions on societal progress play a central role, and contestation is ultimately deemed legitimate and even essential.[98] In this sense, any version of modernity is continuously susceptible to conflict and tension, and various patterns and pathways should be understood as (temporary) outcomes or stabilisations of conflict. But whereas in democratic, pluralistic societies contestation evolves around a formalised system of access to the

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[96] Although sometimes officially affiliated with the Party, intellectuals were the only force in society that could 'compete' with the Party on the basis of knowledge; they had some kind of power base of their own. On the one hand, since the communist project was unevenly based on a technocratic and rational vision of societal progress and was thus reliant on 'technocratic' specialists, and on the other because of the perceived need for a cultural revolution and complete mobilisation of society, for which the party-state needed humanist intellectuals. In this way, potential autonomy (and thus conflict) derived from the functional need for intellectuals in the communist project. In addition, the ideological nature of the project induced factionalism and varying interpretations of the 'correct line'. In other words, the insistence on the necessity to follow the 'correct line' in constructing a socialist society in itself created the ideational space for different interpretations of this line (see for this point, Jowitt 1992: 8-9).

[97] It is important here to point to the altered framework for intellectual activity in the communist period. As Verdery (1991: 73) suggests, the position of the intellectuals in society was made much more dependent on the state bureaucracy. During the interwar years, intellectuals grew more autonomous as a social group by carving out institutional positions and claims to superior knowledge. At the same time, they were dependent on both the state and the market for the continuation of their cultural production. The communist regime changed all of this in that it made intellectuals much more effectively and comprehensively dependent on the state.

[98] In totalitarian regimes the role of the communist party as a vanguard is fundamental in bringing about a new society, institutionalising the critique of the old regime and basing its legitimacy on the 'constitutive myth' of the role of contestation.

political, in communist societies conflict follows a different logic, strongly conditioned by the ubiquitous position of the party-state.

The history of the implementation, consolidation, and adaptation of communism in Romania can to a great measure be understood by looking at two kinds of collective actors, the party élite and the intellectuals. The a-typical nature of Romanian Communism consists of two elements: the unusual endurance of Stalinism and the emergence of a radical nationalism fused with communism. As I will show below, the Romanian distinctness was the outcome of the autonomy, creativity and intransigence of local political actors.

Below I will outline the emergence of a core ruling élite from intra-party struggles and the increasing significance of the technocratic and humanist intelligentsia from the 1960s onwards. The structure of the section is based on a distinction between two temporal phases, which overlap with two (extended) moments of conflict between social actors. The two phases are: the phase of Stalinist emulation characterised by intra-party struggles over political domination and the correct interpretation of communism (1947-1961), and the subsequent period (1961-1989), in which the conflict between the party and intellectuals over the precise interpretation of national Communism was dominant. In the latter period, the intellectuals gained some (politically relevant) autonomy, which was, however, partially undone in the period of re-Stalinisation (1971-1989), as the party-state re-asserted its prominence. Nevertheless, intellectual impact was made on the official party line as a specific group of intellectuals formed a discursive coalition with the Ceauşescu regime in the 1970s, institutionalising a specific interpretation of national Communism.

Stalinist emulation (1947-1961)

Although a Romanian socialist current could be identified from the end of the nineteenth century onwards, it was not until 1944 that it gained a wide social basis. The most important Romanian socialist thinker, Dobrogeanu-Gherea, was a social-democrat in favour of a form of legalist evolutionism (Shafir 1985: 14), and hardly approved of revolutionary solutions to the Romanian situation. In the interwar period the Romanian socialist movement was effectively subordinated to the universalist Comintern (Denize

2002; Tismăneanu 2003), while its membership was dominated by Hungarians, Jews, Russians and Bulgarians, rather than Romanians. These factors strongly contributed to its 'foreign image' in a period in which nationalism was the dominant ideology in Romania (see Verdery 1995). This image was reinforced by the fact that national minorities in the newly acquired territories opted for supporting an internationalist doctrine against the centralising Romanian state. For ethnic Romanians it was hardly plausible to support a political movement that was easily identified with its 'historical enemy', Russia, and which promulgated the undoing of the recently established Greater Romanian state (Shafir 1985: 21-9).

As in most countries in Eastern Europe, the Romanian Communists came to political power thanks to the backing of Soviet political, economic, and military might. The Romanian Communists first joined a coalition government in 1944, after a coup d'état in August that brought down wartime military dictator Antonescu, ended Romania's alliance with the Axis powers, and formally restored democracy. The restoration of democratic structures was short-lived however, as the Communists gradually expanded their influence in politics through the formation of the National Democratic Front, a coalition of left-wing movements. Within a few years, the Communists controlled virtually the whole government and proceeded to eliminate the pre-war political parties as well as perceived 'class enemies', and eventually establishing a People's Democracy (30 December, 1947).[99]

Once the Communist regime was established, its consolidation had the nature of a revolution 'from above', that is to say, its relation with society was one of coercion, violence, and mobilisation controlled by the party. During the first fifteen years of communist rule, critique and conflict over the nature of the communist reconstruction of society could only take place within the party itself. The early years of communist

[99] The imposition of communism in the immediate postwar period followed a similar, stage-like pattern in many countries. First the communists entered a coalition government, increasing their influence in a formally democratic system, and eventually 'crowded out' all other political forces to install a People's Democracy, directly subordinated to the Soviet Union (see King 1980: 47-51). People's Democracy was a conceptual expression of the subordinate relation with the Soviet center and constituted a specific phase in the development of socialism, in which the lowest stage was made up by the bourgeois democracies and the highest by the socialist societies (at the time, the Soviet Union) (Janos 2000: 236; see also Roberts 1951: 312-3).

experience in Romania (1947-1961) were dominated by a virtually absolute obedience and subordination to the Soviet Union.[100] In the Romanian case, subordination was enhanced by the fact that a communist tradition had been largely absent and membership of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP)[101] was conspicuously low in respect to other countries in the interwar period. Additionally, the leadership of the Communist regime that was literally installed in 1945 was overwhelmingly dominated by Soviet forces and their sympathisers (Chirot 1978*b*: 460). Nevertheless, despite strong subordination to the Soviet model and its rigid emulation by Romanian Communists, a more autonomous and nationally-oriented Romanian project did emerge after the most immediate forms of subordination subsided.[102] Paradoxically, the increased space for local autonomy expressed itself in a persevering, dogmatic pursuit of the Stalinist model. This dogmatism formed the outlook of the dominant ruling élite around the General Secretary Gheorghiu-Dej[103], who emerged as undisputed leader.

In the early years of Romanian Stalinism (1948-52), two major factional struggles within the newly established ruling élite took place.[104] The ultimate outcome of these struggles was the obstruction of the emergence of any alternative vision of the Romanian pathway to socialism, as practically all potential carriers of deviant ideas had been removed from the political arena. From these conflicts, the Gheorghiu-Dej group

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[100] In effect, deviation from the Stalinist macro-political model was immediately branded as a 'separate road to socialism', a transgression that led to the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Soviet Bloc in 1948 (Janos 2000: 244; on the Romanian subordination, see in particular Denize 2002 and Tismăneanu 2003).

[101] Although the Romanian Workers Party only changed its name to that of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) in 1965, I will refer throughout the text to RCP.

[102] Instances of this were the ending of direct Soviet exploitation through the so-called Sovrom companies and the retreat of Soviet troops from Romanian territory in the latter half of the 1950s.

[103] Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej had played a prominent role in the underground Romanian Communist Party (RCP) in the interwar period. He had been a member of the central committee of the RCP since 1935 and had been imprisoned for ten years for his participation in a railway strike in 1933. During his imprisonment, he emerged as the leader of the 'prison nucleus'. In 1944, he became one of the leaders of the RCP, together with members returning from the Soviet Union (among whom was Ana Pauker).

[104] By 1946, Ştefan Foriş, the Moscow-appointed general secretary of the RCP, had already been assassinated, apparently on the orders of Moscow.

(a group of Communists that had been imprisoned with Gheorghiu-Dej in the 1930s and had remained in Romania illegally during the war) emerged victorious. The first victim of the post-war factional conflicts was Lucreţiu Pătrăşcanu, a communist intellectual. He was considered the most prominent national communist and therefore a potential alternative for the Party leadership. Pătrăşcanu was contested as he might have formulated a viable version of Romanian national Communism and therefore constituted a threat to the Stalinists (cf. Tismăneanu 2003: 104-5). Pătrăşcanu was eventually executed in 1954. Within the ruling élite, the remaining contending faction of Gheorghiu-Dej was the so-called Moscovites' group of Ana Pauker, Vasile Luca, and Teohari Georgescu, of whom the first two had been in exile in Moscow and returned to Romania only in 1944 (Gabanyi 1975: 15). The 'Moscovite' group was portrayed as representing foreigners (the 'internationalist faction') and the intelligentsia (Crowther 1988: 49).[105] After the expulsion of the Moscovite faction in 1952 (on the accusation of 'rightist deviationism'), Gheorghiu-Dej emerged as the main leader. His victory signified the surfacing of a relatively autonomous 'native' faction (autonomous both in an internal and external sense), a development which was highlighted by the Romanianisation of the Communist party and even more so by Gheorghiu-Dej's resistance to processes of de-Stalinisation and liberalisation instigated by Khruschev. Gheorghiu-Dej resisted Khruschev's line by claiming that de-Stalinisation had already taken place in Romania (in the form of the purging of the Moscovites), although in reality Gheorghiu-Dej represented a policy line that remained strongly Stalinist.

Further conflict emerged over the Stalinist line in the late 1950s, as Gheorghiu-Dej was not only challenged by Moscow but also from within the RCP itself, and on similar grounds: once again the question of de-Stalinisation. An important power struggle within the Party came to light in 1956 as the orthodox line of Gheorghiu-Dej was questioned by two members of the politburo. Miron Constantinescu, a sociologist, leading intellectual and one of the architects of economic policy, argued in 1956 for economic reforms and a democratisation of the party and intellectual life, arguing for an upgrading of the position of technocrats in the RCP (Chirot 1978a: 470). In a similar

[105] The division often made between native Communists and Moscovites was never absolute, as the two factions were rather incohesive (Shafir 1985: 35), and both fractions followed Stalinist lines (Tismăneanu 1984: 180, fn 5; 2003; see also Deletant 1999: 83-8).

vein, Iosif Chişinevski, original member of the party and leading ideologue, argued for Krushchevite reforms. Both were accused of 'liberalism' and 'revisionism' and expelled by Gheorghiu-Dej in 1957. Constantinescu was regarded as the only legitimate alternative to the Gheorghiu-Dej faction at the time (Tismăneanu 1984: 182), after Pătrăşcanu and the Moscovite group had been purged, and with his silencing Gheorghiu-Dej could emerge as the undisputed leader. The successive political eliminations of Pătrăşcanu, the Pauker-Luca-Georgescu group, and Constantinescu and Chişinevski did not merely concern the consolidation of power within the party. They were also significant in terms of the orientation and direction of change. The final settlement of political conflict within the 'professional vanguard' effectively prevented the emergence of any alternative discourse.

National Communism (1961-1989)

The emergence of Gheorghiu-Dej's faction as cohesive and dominant was intimately related to its 'antifactionalism' and its claim to represent the genuine communist model or 'correct line'. All possible rivals to Gheorghiu-Dej were silenced with reference to their status as 'class enemies'. Gheorghiu-Dej argued that Pătrăşcanu was 'an agent of the Fascist-bourgeois police and the British Secret Service' (Deletant 1999: 88), accused the Moscovite group of obstructing the processes of industrialisation and collectivisation and thus sabotaging the construction of socialism[106] (Deletant 1999: 86) Finally, he criticised Constantinescu for 'anarcho-liberal' deviationism (Tismăneanu 1984). After 1953, Gheorghiu-Dej equally invoked the authenticity of his model on the international plane against both revisionist tendencies of de-Stalinisation in the Soviet Union and the attempt to create a supra-national division of labour among the satellite states (see section 6.3). In this way, Gheorghiu-Dej turned from an internationalist into the defender of the national interest, without diverging from the essentially Stalinist path of modernisation (based on the imperatives of single-party rule and industrialisation). The resistance of the RCP to bloc-wide trends of de-Stalinisation resulted in a nationalist turn, which was defended by a legitimising discourse invoking

[106] A further argument in the case against the Moscovite group was its non-native origin, Pauker being Jewish and Luca Hungarian. Anti-semitism and romanianisation thus further underpinned Gheorghiu-Dej's image of authentic native proletarianism (see Ionescu 1964: 209-11).

the right to national industrialisation, national sovereignty, and autonomy.[107] A concomitant internal liberalisation created a limited space for political expression and contention.

Nicolae Ceauşescu, the new leader following the death of Gheorghiu-Dej in 1965, continued the nationalist line initiated by Gheorghiu-Dej, and his early years of rule (1965-1971) are generally regarded as years of relative liberalisation and relaxation.[108] This political opening is significant for the discussion of political agency and modernisation as it allowed intellectuals to articulate alternative visions whereas thus far any emergence of counter-visions had been effectively impeded. The nationalist turn in the 1960s produced exactly such a space for contestation, as it was accompanied by a 'guided' liberalisation, i.e., liberalisation within strict limits set by the party. Within this context, both the humanist intelligentsia and members of the technocracy could move to the foreground. The former could articulate visions of decentralised and relatively autonomous intellectual activities whereas the latter could further visions of economic reforms based on specialised knowledge. Partial emancipation led to increasing demands for additional freedoms, thereby potentially undermining the imperatives of centralised industrialisation and single-party rule.

Ideological mobility was, however, decisively abandoned in July 1971, the direct trigger being two speeches by Ceauşescu, referred to later as the 'July Theses'. A decade of liberalisation, increased contact with the West, and increased intellectual freedom had led - in the perception of Ceauşescu (and influential, dogmatic party leaders around him) - to the thriving of potentially threatening forces (see Negrici 1999: 64). Alongside these domestic considerations, it seems that this 'mini-cultural revolution' imposed by

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[107] In this period of burgeoning nationalism, the myth was created that the Pauker-Luca-Georgescu group had been responsible for excessive Stalinism, in contrast to the alleged nationalism of the Dej-group (Tismăneanu 2003: 174).

[108] The relatively liberal course aided Ceauşescu not only in gaining public support for the regime, it served him equally well in his personal struggle for the succession of Gheorghiu-Dej. By constructing a reformist and liberal image while invoking external threats (the Soviet Union), Ceauşescu was able to ward off rivals from the 'old guard' of the Gheorghiu-Dej era (Laux 1979: 61; Shafir 1983: 411). Furthermore, by pointing to Gheorghiu-Dej's terror and dogmatism and stimulating a process of 'de-Dejification', Ceauşescu could claim to be the originator of the nationalist line (Shafir 1983: 412-3).

Ceauşescu was inspired equally by external factors, most directly by a visit to China and North Korea.

The new course initiated by the July Theses entailed the restoration of party imperatives in two important areas: relations between the party and society, especially intellectuals, and the economic orientation of communism. The relation between the party and society changed as a result of the re-imposition of party hegemony and direct control, and by the anti-intellectualism and promotion of mass culture and populist nationalism. The regime undertook an offensive against those forces in society that had sought to use the limited freedom granted to them in the 1960s to move beyond its boundaries and reform socialism. Both the young generation of intellectuals and writers, and an increasingly numerous stratum of technocratic or reformist élites (who posed the threat of 'narrow professionalism') constituted a menace for the party (Gabanyi 1975: 141-61; Shafir 1985: 91-2). The former had clearly shown their inclination towards liberalisation during the 1968 Writers' Conference in the form of demands for leading positions in cultural institutions and the abolition of censorship (Culic 1999: 52; Martin 2002c). The latter was perceived as a threat by the orthodox group within the upper echelons of the party, as in the sixties a considerable number of technocrats had entered the party (Shafir 1985: 91-2).

The mini-cultural revolution served the purpose of re-subordinating both groups through the reassertion of a Stalinist vision of socialist construction, in the field of culture by re-imposing socialist realism, and in the economy by reiterating central planning and party control. The emphasis on centralised planning (as opposed to the decentralising reforms taking hold elsewhere in Eastern Europe, notably in Hungary) undermined the position that experts or technocrats had gained in the 1960s, tipping the balance in favour of humanist intellectuals, as the regime regarded intellectuals as political instruments in the socialisation of the population (Fischer 1989: 109-119; Jowitt 1971: 185-9).

The strong emphasis on national culture and its affiliation with popular socialisation and mobilisation found its most important expression in a strand of thought that had emerged in the 1960s but gained full importance only at the end of the 1970s, the so-

called thesis of 'protochronism'[109] (see chapter 9). The imposed dogmatism of the July Theses resulted in the polarisation of the field of cultural production. Whereas Ceauşescu's intentions was to bind the intellectuals to the regime and its new course (Martin 2002c), what actually happened was a negative reaction from large parts of those intellectuals that 'favored a Western definition of culture and insisted upon academic competence as the principal criterion of authority' (Culic 1999: 53). At the same time, a positive reaction came from a much smaller group of 'protochronists' that provided an important cultural alibi for the autarkic and isolationist policy as well as sustaining a cult of personality for Ceauşescu (Martin 2002c). The first faction, the major part of the intellectuals with a more reformist, universalist orientation, dominated the officially created cultural institutions of the communist system, such as the Writers' Union and the Romanian Academy. The other faction, the so-called 'protochronists', remained outside these institutions, carefully protected by the former group, but they did have access to important cultural journals (such as 'The Flame' (*Flacăra*) and 'The Week' (*Săptămâna*)). At the end of the 1970s, the latter faction managed to obtain official support, whereas the first, entrenched in the official cultural institutions, was besieged by the party. The discursive outcome of the restructuration of political forces was a syncretism between 'protochronism' and Ceauşescu's interpretation of modernisation as economic autarchy and isolationism. It was this syncretic discourse that informed the Romanian pathway to national Communism during the 1970s and 80s.

6.3 The national Communist pattern of modernisation

The institutionalisation of the communist programme in Eastern Europe followed a similar pattern throughout the region. In economic terms, the absolute goal of industrialisation on the basis of central planning was its main feature, whereas in political terms the subjugation of cultural production to the exigencies of 'building socialism' and comprehensive mass mobilisation for the benefit of the socialist ideal were arguably the most conspicuous aspects. At the same time, after a rather homogenous Stalinist phase of consolidation, national approaches in dealing with the

[109] The label stems from the Greek *proto-chronos*, which means 'first in time' (Culic 1999: 69, fn 20).

post-Stalinist 'thaw', stagnation in the socio-economic sphere, and intellectual critique diverged widely. The specificity of the Romanian case lay in its unrenounced fervor in pursuing Stalinist industrial policies, the announcement of an independent course within the internationalist communist bloc in the 1960s, and the prevention of the emergence of both a reformist/managerialist project and a humanist/intellectualist critique.

Socio-economic transformation

Accelerated industrialisation was arguably the main social goal that communist regimes set themselves. A rapid transformation of the economy served a number of purposes. Its political goal was primarily to strengthen the role of the party in controlling and programming social development, which was further expressed (as shown below) in the centralisation and nationalisation of the economy, and central planning. Furthermore, the intensive transformation of society that was perceived to be the result of industrialisation was aimed at undermining the social position of the bourgeoisie (and other class enemies) and creating a sizeable working class, which, at least in theory, would guide further transformation into a socialist society. Economic goals were directly aiming at socio-economic modernisation, i.e., the transformation of an agricultural society into a society based on a rationalised economy oriented towards progressive growth. Industrialisation was perceived in a distinct way: the imported model was a fusion of 'techniques of government and a social pattern peculiar to Russia' (Dumitriu 1961: 3) and 'an ideological projection of past developmental patterns' (Arnason 2000a: 67). In other words, the imported Stalinist model reflected the needs of Soviet society (the creation of large-scale heavy industry, the transformation of the rural economy) which were reflected in a mode of development which could be called 'Fordism in one country' (Ray 1996: 110). This mode of development rested on a model of extensive growth, which 'is amenable to central direction and implies relatively low levels of social differentiation' (Ray 1996: 108). It can be said that '[t]he goal of Stalinist economic development recapitulated the central dilemma of industrialization, namely to convert peasant labour into an industrial proletariat while increasing food production and preventing traditional rural habits (e.g. fragmented cultivation) from dissipating productive gains' (Ray 1996: 108-9).

The particular emphasis on investment in the means of production and the mobilisation of (unskilled) labour not only reveals the economic goals of the Communist project, but at the same time points to ideological and moral priorities, i.e. '[the] commitment to one line of development entails a corresponding disengagement from other, alternative commitments, such, for example, as reducing inequalities of income among social strata of geographic regions' (Gouldner 1980: 213), priorities that in themselves point to the imperative of collective autonomy or national self-determination. The 'economising behaviour' of socialist regimes demonstrated an (irrational) obsession with rationalisation of the economy, economic development, control through central planning, and an increasing division of labour. This obsession pointed - more than anything else - to the substitution of industrialisation for human emancipation. Instead of being perceived as a mode of development, industrialisation became an absolute priority, or, in other words, 'industrialisation, which had first been a *means* to the end of human emancipation, ha[d] become an *end* in itself' (Gouldner 1980: 217).

Collectivisation as a social goal was closely related to the above-mentioned underlying reasons for industrialisation. As Jowitt (1992: 29) argues, collectivisation had much to do with an 'attack on the social institutions and cultural orientations of peasant society', and was 'integrally related to a comprehensive policy of industrialization and education' (Jowitt 1992: 32). The main political objectives were party control over the economy, centralisation and rationalisation of the economy, and the relegation of agriculture to industrial development. In economic terms, the modernisation of the agricultural economy was to lead to an increasing mechanisation of agriculture, and the stimulation of large-scale, extensive production. Collectivisation did not constitute a goal in itself, however, as it was always tied to the absolute priority of industrialisation, and in general to what Jowitt calls 'revolutionary breakthrough'.

The distinctiveness of the institutionalised pattern of Romanian Communism therefore did not so much lie in its absolute commitment to industrialisation as such. It was rather the unshaking belief in the 'mythology of industrialisation' until the very end of the project, and a continued centralised and collectivist approach towards industrialisation, linked with an interpretation of industrialisation as the exclusive means towards national

sovereignty and collective autonomy. In the emulation phase, one of the main imperatives for the construction of the socialist nation was wide-scale, comprehensive industrialisation (the other being cultural revolution, see below).

In the initial years of Communism these objectives were derived directly from the Soviet experience, and its emulation was deemed functional for the construction of socialist society. From the mid-1950s onwards, more emphasis was placed on specific Romanian circumstances, as the RCP now explicitly regarded national autonomy as deriving primarily from a strategy of emulation. The adaptation of the emulationist strategy to local realities merely required 'operational autonomy' within the wider framework of Stalinism/communism (Jowitt 1971: 152-5). From the mid-1950s onwards, the tenacity of the RCP to a programme of modernisation fundamentally based on industrialisation revealed its primary and substantive commitment to the achievement of national, collective autonomy, in the face of both internal and external resistance (cf. Jowitt 1971: 181-2). A reconsideration of the hierarchy of priorities and primary values occurred, in which national self-determination was regarded an integral part of the project of socialism. However, whereas under Gheorghiu-Dej self-determination was understood as the precondition for the continuation of a Stalinist project in Romania, under Ceauşescu national self-determination became the primary substantive value of the Communist project as such.[110]

In the period 1948-50, the Romanian economy was nationalised and private assets transformed into state property (Denize 2002; Georgescu 1991: 233). A crucial part of the economy was subordinated to the Soviet Union, by means of the Sovrom companies, which were excluded from the nationalising process and enjoyed considerable privileges (such as extra-territorial rights and exemption from taxes). This

[110] Ceauşescu re-evaluated the concept of the nation within the Communist project, turning the RCP into the direct successor of all historical attempts to realise national unity and independence. The 1974 Party Program referred explicitly to the origination of the Romanian state in the alleged Thracian-Dacian 'state', thereby constructing a direct link between Romanian origins and the Communist party (RCP 1975: 93). The Communist project constituted the continuation of the struggle for national freedom, but was also considered as realising a higher stage of national emancipation.

situation changed only in 1956, when the last Sovrom company was returned to Romanian hands.[111]

During the Stalinist period, the process of the East European countries' integration into the Soviet economic sphere was based on a degree of national autarchy, or, in other words, the development of a multi-faceted national industrialisation process. In this sense, Romania's emulation of the Stalinist model was part of a pan-East-European phenomenon, a recreation of the Soviet model in various national contexts (Turnock 1970: 546-7). The priority of extensive industrialisation was expressed in high investment rates in the heavy industry and energy sectors (strongly favouring producer-goods over consumer-goods), the creation of large-scale industrial complexes (following the logic of extensive growth), and the subordination of collectivised agriculture to the needs of industry (cf. Montias 1967). The pattern and level of state investments in industry, expressed in the various five- and six-year plans, showed an absolute priority for investment in heavy industry. The first five-year plan for the period 1951-55 allocated 51 percent of investments to go into industry whereas another considerable amount was given for energy sources (Ionescu 1964: 191). At the same time, local consumption was held in check (Montias 1967: 29). The post-1953 'New Course' introduced some relaxation – following the pattern of developments throughout the bloc - in the form of lower investment rates for industry and concessions to the population.[112] The second five-year plan for the period 1956-60 indicated, however, a renewed drive for industrialisation, with 56 percent of planned investments dedicated to industry (Crowther 1988: 58).

Following Stalin's death in 1953, the centralised and over-organised understanding of economic transformation was increasingly challenged by alternative visions, both inside Romania and within the Soviet bloc. Romanian deviation from the general pattern of reformism was revealed when the Romanian élite refused to adapt its domestic economy

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[111] The Sovrom companies were situated in key sectors of the economy (such as oil, mining, wood, and gas), and although the companies were formally mutual efforts, Soviet participation was mostly limited to seized German capital (Montias 1967: 19; Welzk 1982*b*: 20-1). The Sovrom companies were in reality largely relegated to the direct economic needs of the Soviet Union at the time.

[112] Montias (1967: 38) claims that some relaxation was probably inescapable in the early 1950s, as a result of the socio-economic effects of expansionist industrialisation.

to the exigencies of the Soviet bloc at large and continued with the model of extensive industrialisation and rigid central planning (Montias 1967: 16). Whilst other countries in Eastern Europe opted for a more decentralised, reformist, and 'consumerist' pathway, influenced by developments in the USSR, the Romanian regime relaunched initiatives for national development on the basis of heavy industrialisation.[113] The third five-year plan of 1961 again revealed the continued commitment to the development of an autonomous industrial base, with its emphasis on investment in energy, machine building, and the chemical industry (Chirot 1978a: 472; Crowther 1988: 58-9), at a time when within the CMEA plans for a region-wide socialist division of labour were launched. Individual countries (East Germany[114], Czechoslovakia) criticised Romania's perseverance in national autarchy (Turnock 1970: 547). Faced with Khrushchev's redefinition of the communist developmental model as based on reformism and co-ordination within the Soviet bloc, the Romanian leadership emphasised its commitment to an enduring strategy of national development (Chirot 1978a: 471). The nationalist turn signified the partial detachment of Romania from the socialist world and a reorientation of trade patterns towards the West.

Nevertheless, in the early years of Ceauşescu's leadership (1965-1969), Romania's immunity from reformist tendencies appeared to be unsustainable, as more reformist elements were introduced within an overall programme of comprehensive industrialisation. Reformism was exemplified by an emphasis on mass participation, increased local autonomy, and collective decision-making in enterprises in the reform programme of 1967, the outcome of two years of debate between the political leadership and more reform-minded elements (Crowther 1988: 82-3; Shafir 1985: 120). The

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[113] The trend in many other socialist countries was to answer the crisis of the communist model by an attempt to shift from an exhausted extensive growth model, based on large-scale industrialisation and mass production, to a more diversified intensive growth model, which would favour the increased production and distribution of consumer goods, and which would mobilise workers to increase labour productivity (Ray 1996: 112-3). In Romania, in contrast, the attempt was 'to overcome the stultifying effects of centralization on production not through reforms, but through forcing up the level of investment' (Verdery 1991: 100).

[114] The East Germans, being strong supporters of a socialist division of labour, called for 'passive industrialisation' in the Balkan countries (see Turnock 1970: 547).

programme apparently indicated an attempt by the party leadership to deal with the structural dilemmas of the communist developmental model.

This reformist tendency was, however, nipped in the bud, as reformist initiatives were criticised and opposed by two groups in Romanian society, i.e. the bureaucrats in charge of economic ministries and hard-liners within the party (Crowther 1988: 83). In the end, Ceauşescu sustained these criticisms, and their eventual impact on overall economic orientation was minimal. Economic policy-making was increasingly centralised and the general tenets of the Stalinist model re-articulated, as was clear from the five-year plans adopted in the 1970s and 1980s. Rates of investment destined for industry amounted to around 50 percent of total investments, the lion's share going to the so-called Group A industries (producer-goods), and remaining significantly higher than the rates destined for agriculture or the production of consumer-goods (Shafir 1985: 108-9).

The nationalist turn at the beginning of the 1960s had redirected Romanian economic trade patterns and credit relations towards the West. In the 1970s, however, increasing awareness in the West of Romania's rather weak credit-worthiness and its poor performance in agriculture made the RCP divert Romanian trade increasingly to the so-called Lesser Developed Countries (LDCs), as these seemed to be both less rigid than Western countries and to provide a way to Western technology in any case (Lawson 1983; Linden 1986; Shafir 1985: 111). In this way, the RCP could continue its project of political autonomy by diverting trade to non-CMEA countries, whereas its self-proclaimed status as a 'socialist developing country' would bring the economic benefits necessary for the further construction of its domestic economy. Relations with developing countries became highly significant, as these countries could provide necessary raw materials and at the same time constituted export markets for Romanian industrial products. In line with its aims of national independence and economic autarchy, Romania joined the GATT and the IMF in the early 1970s, as well as the 'Group of 77' of non-aligned states, which ensured access to the European market and preferential treatment (Lawson 1983; Shafir 1985: 112). In the 1980s, however, the RCP limited its foreign trade to minimal requirements as it deemed its most important priority the paying-off of its foreign debt, leading to extreme austerity measures in the

domestic sphere, while blaming the West for exploitation and imperialism (Shafir 1985: 117, 119).

During the entire communist period, agriculture was subordinated to the imperatives of industrialisation. Agricultural policy was essentially aimed at achieving two objectives: the mobilisation and socialisation of the peasantry through collectivisation, and the technical and organisational upgrading – through mechanisation and rational organisation – of agricultural production. The first, revolutionary, purpose regarded the profound restructuring of agriculture by disintegrating the (remnants of) feudal and capitalist ownership structures and the creation of collective organisations ultimately controlled by the Communist state. The first drives for collectivisation in the countryside had a highly purifying character, in that they were aimed at eliminating enduring class structures and peasant exploitation (especially directed against relatively large landowners, the 'kulaks'), and should result in more egalitarian and homogeneous agricultural structures (cf. Berend 1996: 213-4). In addition, through collective organisation the peasantry was much more effectively amenable to resocialisation and mobilisation for the construction of socialism. By means of collectivisation the peasant mentality (in essence adverse to the socialist cause[115]) could be profoundly changed, the peasant integrated into the communist system, and its productive efforts made to serve the purpose of the construction of socialist society[116] (Jowitt 1971: 121-3).

The second, equally important, purpose of agriculture policy was the reorganisation and mechanisation of agriculture and its relegation to the needs of industry. In theory, the rationalised and technologised organisation of agriculture should lead to much higher rates of productivity and output. Increased production could then be used for export, which would generate the financial means for the importation of the necessary

[115] The distrust of the Communist regime towards the peasantry was exemplified by accusations of sabotage of production plans, refusal to fulfil the set quota, collusion against collectivisation and trade on the black market (Welzk 1982*b*: 105).

[116] 'The development of a cooperative spirit, comunal labour, the reinforcement of discipline and order in the cooperatives, the elevation of the socialist conscience of every collective peasant and his responsibility towards the common patrimony, towards the general interest of our society' were considered of primary importance (Ceauşescu 1969: 36).

components for industrialisation. Agriculture served primarily as a source of income for industrialisation (Welzk 1982b: 112).

During the 1950s, large-scale collectivisation was hardly coming off the ground whereas the technical upgrading of the agricultural sector was impeded by the lowest investment rates in agriculture in Eastern Europe (Welzk 1982b: 98). Only from 1958 onwards the party substituted a veritable collectivisation drive for earlier relatively mild policies, and it could announce the complete collectivisation of agriculture in 1962. Whereas in 1958 only 18 percent of the farms had been collectivised, in 1962 collectivisation of the whole sector was near complete as 96 percent were now collective farms (Georgescu 1991: 235; Montias 1967: 53). In that same period, the share of collectives or cooperatives in overall agricultural land rose from 17.4 to 77.4 percent, whereas the share of private farmers decreased from 44.7 to 3.5 percent (Welzk 1982b: 225). Agriculture's main goals were identified as producing (low quality) food for the urban population, and (high quality) agricultural products for export purposes, in order to finance growing imports, such as raw materials and machinery (Montias 1967: 30-2; see also Gilberg 1990: 127). The five- and six-year plans were in this respect as self-evident in defining the role of agriculture as they were in their approach towards industry.[117] The absolute priority of industrialisation meant the diversion of investments to the modernisation and expansion of industry, and seemed to entail a voluntarist approach towards agriculture, in which little effort and investment were expected to lead to highly positive results. In this sense, the self-proclaimed completion of collectivisation by the regime in 1962 did not entail a change in policy or a shift in priority of agricultural policy. In fact, from 1947 onwards, the RCP's policy was continuously characterised by a lack of investment in the agricultural sector, low priority of mechanisation and education, and an enduring emphasis on the subordinate role of agriculture in the overall project of modernisation, further exemplified by the utilisation of rural manpower for industrialisation purposes (Gilberg 1990: 123). The consolidation of collective farms in the 1960s did not lead to a more balanced investment policy while from the late 1970s onwards the role of agriculture was to generate income from exportation for the payment of the foreign debt.

[117] From the first five-year plan (1951-55) until the sixth (1976-80), planned investment in agriculture and forestry never exceeded 20 percent of total investment (Montias 1967; Shafir 1985).

The negligence of agriculture and its relegation to a secondary status in the economic policies of the RCP seem to be the result of its one-dimensional attitude towards economic policy. The imaginary of rational control over nature through industrialism clearly formed an essential part of the Communist project of modernisation and in this vision agriculture could only perform a marginal and additive role. The apparent disregard for even a transformational role of agriculture in the structural change from a pre-dominantly rural economy to an industrialised society further underlines the highly one-sided attention for the 'myth' of industrialisation. In addition, the Romanian path to communism has been characterised by a strong opposition to any structural relegation of its economy to the international division of labour as envisaged by more industrialised countries within the socialist world.

Political-cultural transformation

In a similar vein to the socio-economic transformation, which was aimed at both continuing and superseding the capitalist project of an industrialised market economy, the communist political-cultural revolution aspired to both neutralise the social divisions of class society and to perfect the democratic ideal in the form of 'democratic centralism'.[118] The institutional aspects of the political and cultural programme of Communism aimed at the concentration of all political power in the party-state, which was both the ultimate expression of complete societal unity and the singular guiding force for the realisation of the Communist project. In the last analysis, the national Communist project was about the promulgation and institutionalisation of a form of collective autonomy. The subjugation and mobilisation of all societal forces under the banner of this social imaginary was one instance of its all-pervading significance; the erasure of the distinction between the political and the cultural another.

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[118] In Communist discourse, socialist democracy was defined as the transcendence of social antagonism: '[T]he essence of socialist democracy [consists of] the ensurance of all conditions, in which the people can observe its sovereign right to participate in the settlement of the affairs of the country both through its representatives and in a direct way, in the mobilisation of the wide masses of the people for the development and the advancement of socialist society. Socialist democracy ensures the harmonic relation between the general interests of society and the interests of the individual citizens and allows for the full development of the capacities and talents of any worker, [and] the many-sided manifestation of human personality' (Ceauşescu 1971: 40).

Political and cultural transformation can be characterised by means of three relationships of the state and its surroundings: the state and the party; the state and society; the state and the intellectuals. In practical terms, the political objectives of the establishment and consolidation of a socialist society had direct implications for the form of the state, society and its representation, and the role of intellectuals.

The state and the party. The communist transformation aimed at the concentration of all political (and social) power in the Communist party, and its domination of the state. From the moment the RCP emerged from its state of illegality in 1944, its main objective was to disempower and eliminate rival centres of power and construct a political system in which it constituted the only source of political power (in strict terms, the 'Party-as-One' was not a party, that is to say, it did not form one part amongst others, but embodied the only representation of the single societal will, see Lefort 1986: 283-4). In spite of formal representation and a division of political power[119], the only effective body was the Communist party itself. This was indeed acknowledged in the Constitution of 1952, in which the RCP was designated as the '"leading political force" in state and social organizations', a statement reiterated in the 1965 version (Shafir 1985: 42, 95).[120]

In the mid-1950s, Gheorghiu-Dej and his political faction emerged as the singular ruling élite in which virtually all political power was concentrated. The RCP moved towards a form of autocracy in which political behaviour and decision-making were not the result of established rules and procedures, but stemmed directly from the upper echelons of the party. Jowitt has called this, using Weberian terms, a form of

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[119] The political system that was established followed directly the Soviet system as established by the 1936 Soviet constitution; it comprised several formal institutions: the Grand National Assembly (the parliament, carrying the same name as the interwar democratic parliament), a government headed by the prime-minister, the State Council responsible for parliamentary functions when the parliament was not in session, and the People's Councils which allegedly provided for local representation, although in reality they represented central authority (King 1980: 52-3).

[120] Under the pretext of the so-called New Course, the RCP moved towards collective leadership in 1955. This change from single leadership to a form of oligarchy was induced by the trend of de-Stalinisation in the Soviet Union, but never went beyond a superficial, symbolic redistribution of political power (cf. Shafir 1985: 68-9).

'patrimonialism', in which Gheorghiu-Dej attempted to 'establish himself as the primary element in the definition of the Party's character and power'. The emergence of an autocratic form of political system included party dominance over the institutional apparatus of the bureaucracy and security forces (Jowitt 1971: 147-8). Thus, the party represented institutionalised political power (and its organisational role) whilst simultaneously it could performing revolutionary functions (guiding the direction of change). Jowitt confronts the endurance of this 'patrimonial' form of political power and its relation to the entrenched position of the Gheorghiu-Dej faction with the possible alternative of a legal-rational system in which a technocracy would play a significant role (Jowitt 1971: 196).

In the early 1960s, the political system seemed indeed to move in a more pluri-central direction, in which technocratic specialists would play a partially autonomous role in managing the economy. The increasing emphasis on an independent Romanian path to socialism, in which national industrialisation played a key role, seemed to point towards a form of reformist national Communism. However, as Gheorghiu-Dej was directly dependent on the communist tradition of Stalinism, reforms could only be limited. His project had been exclusively based on the emulation of the Soviet Union, and was virtually without local ideological and political origins. Any form of prolonged de-Stalinisation would therefore have meant the undermining of Dej's own position, as it would have discontinued the communist tradition (cf. Feher *et al.* 1983: 152). Nevertheless, the relaxation and 'guided liberalisation' that accompanied the turn away from the Soviet Union from 1962 onwards apparently entailed a more lasting form of de-Stalinisation. The 'dictatorship of the proletariat' seemed less important now that a certain consolidation of the socialist system had taken place.

As Verdery (1991) has pointed out, it was the invocation of the symbol of the nation that led to the loss of control of the Communist party over absolute knowledge. From 1971 onwards, Ceauşescu therefore re-installed central control through the 'mini-cultural revolution'. Any lasting form of de-Stalinisation, reformism, or national Communism (as reformism) was thus prevented and autocratic rule was re-asserted. Various modalities were installed to ensure the hegemony of the party-state, in particular Ceauşescu's personal control. Both technocratic and humanist intellectuals were denied any autonomous social position and were re-arranged in the strict party-

state hierarchy (see below). Furthermore, in 1974 the requirements for holding leading positions in the RCP were made much more stringent. Access to high positions in the party-state hierarchy were made more strictly dependent on the duration of party membership and party activity (King 1980: 87), increasing control over the political and ideological character of the party leadership.[121] Another instance of increased control over party members and state personnel was Ceauşescu's policy of 'rotation of cadres'. Through the alternation of cadre positions between party and state party officials apparently not only gained 'many-sided experience' in fields other than their own, but were also prevented the creation of autonomous political bases outside of the party top (King 1980: 95). An ultimate feature of increased boundary-setting towards society and the concentration of political power in the hands of the few is attested by the tendency towards a dynastic form of communism. From the early 1970s onwards, high leadership positions were given to Elena Ceauşescu, Ceauşescu's wife, and at the end of the decade also to his son, Nicu. In addition, various family members of both Ceauşescu and his wife were promoted into prominent party positions.

The state and society. The relationship between the Communist state and society was one of bureaucratic domination, albeit via various modes of control. Following Verdery (1991: 85-7), three modes of control may be distinguished: remunerative or material control, in which material incentives constitute the key instrument in obtaining compliance from the population; coercive control, in which compliance is ensured by direct coercion; and, normative, or what Verdery calls 'symbolic-ideological' control, in which compliance is induced by reference to ideology, substantive values, or substantive rationality. Whereas the first played an insignificant role in Romanian Communism, the latter two were crucial for the emergence of the national Communist project. The periodisation introduced earlier (the period of emulation and that of national Communism) can be further substantiated through distinguishing between dominant modes of control: the period of emulation was predominantly characterised by coercive control, whereas in the period of national Communism symbolic-ideological control became increasingly important, although coercive control always remained

[121] As King observes: '... individuals with longer party membership and greater leadership experience at lower levels are much less likely to become dissidents within the organization or lead break-away factions' (King 1980: 97).

significant (in particular during the 1980s). In the period of emulation, the dominant relationship between the party-state and society was coercive. The party-state sought to represent and control society in all its facets, hence the creation of an extensive bureaucracy, whose primary task was the complete organisation of society. As the RCP's priority was rapid and comprehensive industrialisation and it enjoyed Soviet support, it relied on coercion and violence to achieve its objectives[122] (King 1980: 100). The setting up of all kinds of 'participatory' institutions, the 'front organisations', do not contradict such a conclusion, as these organisations mainly functioned as 'transmission belts' for party guidelines, and further constituted the monitoring institutions of society.

With the introduction of nationalism and the proclamation of national independence and sovereignty, the Communist leadership introduced the possibility for symbolic-ideological control, which could also be used to counter forms of remunerative control (as common in the reformist projects in other Eastern European states), which would have implied the decentralisation of the political system. Gheorghiu-Dej's move towards independence did not entail a qualitative change in state-society relations, as nationalism was mainly invoked to ensure the continuation of policies of industrialisation. Another development did, however, push the party towards other modes of control. The industrialisation and educational policies of the 1950s had created a technocratic layer or 'new middle class', which was on the rise in the 1960s. Its upward social mobility seemed to indicate two things: the increasing demand for a reform of the communist system and a stronger emphasis on material incentives, and a menace to the position of the traditional ruling élite (Jowitt 1971: 186-9; Verdery 1991: 106-7). The tendency towards liberalisation and openness that characterised the 1960s apparently indicated a shift towards what Verdery calls a remunerative mode of control. Yet this trend was abruptly discontinued with Ceauşescu's re-assertion of central control, the renunciation of the 'bourgeois ideology and a retrograde mentality', and the

[122] Not only the 'continuously exacerbated "class conflict" ', i.e., the elimination of 'class enemies' attest to this (Jowitt 1971: 136), but also the forced project of collectivisation. The most clear-cut instance of the combination of violence and control was the construction of the Black Sea Canal in the early 1950s. This project not only exemplifies the priority of large-scale economic transformation, but also involved large-scale repression and violence towards the 'enemies of the people' who were forced to work on the project.

restitution of the coercive mode of control. Ceauşescu's 'repossession' of society did not simply signify a return to Stalinism, however. In the 1970s, the earlier tendency towards nationalism and independence, which in the 1960s seemed to point to reformism, was adjusted to the central coordination of the Stalinist project of industrialisation. As observed by Verdery (1991: 107), Ceauşescu could now use a symbolic-ideological mode of control (primarily based on the symbol of the nation) to counter tendencies towards reformism. By creating a syncretism between particularist nationalism and Stalinism, Ceauşescu found a way to continue the original project without giving in to decentralising tendencies or external interference.

The state and the intellectuals. The cultural revolution demanded the mobilisation and occasionally the co-optation of the intellectuals as transmitters of the right socialist culture. The cultural revolution thus aimed at redefining the relationship between state and society, and more specifically, between the state and (contentious) intellectuals. The concomitant political (and economic) goals of cultural revolution were the integration and mobilisation of society and the silencing of dissenting social forces. The ultimate aim was to enhance party control, which was understood as increased collective autonomy. In the redefinition of the relationship between the state and the worker or the peasant, and the state and the intellectual, all members of society were formally presumed as equal, whilst at the same time subordinated to the Communist project. As the state was the embodiment of the workers' sovereignty, workers were dispossessed of a means of protest (through strikes and collective demands). The same held true for intellectuals: as they were obliged to dedicate their work to the necessities of the construction of a socialist society (in the form of social realism), they were dispossessed of their means to protest and critical reflection.

As intellectuals had the capacity to formulate different world-views and were therefore capable of undermining the vision held by the ruling élite, their compliance and active participation in the Communist project was perceived as a prerequisite.[123] The relationship between the party and the intellectuals was one of mutual necessity. On the one hand, the Communist party needed intellectuals for reasons of legitimation as

[123] In 1946 Gheorghiu-Dej called for the co-operation of the intellectuals in the rebuilding of the country, stating that not only reactionary action but also self-chosen isolation were detrimental to the intellectual mission (cited in: Gabanyi 1975: 19).

well as technical and bureaucratic control, and at the same time was well aware that intellectuals might form a threat to the regime's coherence if they managed to construct and diffuse an alternative world-view. On the other hand, the intellectuals needed the party for reasons of employment and income, as well as for reasons of enhancing status.[124]

Throughout the communist period, one could observe a wavering of the RCP between attempts at co-optation and/or liberalisation, and endeavours to absolute control over the intellectuals (through cultural policies that reiterated the absolute truth of the dogmas and through socio-economic policies). Immediately after the communist taking-over in 1944, the necessity for cadres and intellectuals was felt as of 'great tactical significance', since the party itself was extremely small (Gabanyi 1975: 19). In the period from 1945 to 1948, a rapid expansion of membership took place, an 'uncritical' move that was later strongly criticised by Gheorghiu-Dej, and educational institutions were set up to train newly recruited cadres.[125] These institutions strongly followed the Soviet-model, both in structure (they included cultural institutions, a cadre school, and a Writer's Union, and in outlook (they were designed to actively promote the Stalinist model). A process of 'russification' took place, as any form of nationalism was strongly condemned and adherence to slavic elements in the Romanian culture and language encouraged. After 1949, the attempted 'embedding' of the party in society was furthered by accepting 'bourgeois' intellectuals and scientists, as the party was in dire need of cadres (Jowitt 1971: 103). By the time of Stalin's death in 1953, some elements of de-Stalinisation were felt in Romania. The dogmatism of the early period was slowly replaced by concessions and liberalisation in cultural policy. In reality, this was a process steered from above, as the party leadership only provided such concessions with

[124] As Verdery (1991: 73) observes: 'Romania's metamorphosis from capitalist colony into socialist satellite altered the framework for intellectual activity. It greatly reduced the role of the market and curtailed western influence, while making the state bureaucracy virtually the sole employer and sustainer of culture.'

[125] The Writers' Union and other 'creative unions' were set up to ensure party control over cultural creation. Furthermore, the 'Andrei Zhdanov School for the Social Sciences' was established to train future party cadres (Tismăneanu 2003: 110).

the mutual understanding that the struggle against revisionism and bourgeois ideologies was not to be debilitated under any circumstances (Gabanyi 1975: 43-4).

The period of controlled liberalisation lasted until 1957, when the party re-articulated its earlier dogmatic views and renewed its campaign against revisionists, lack of orthodoxy, and 'a-politicism' (Gabanyi 1975: 68). In the early 1960s, cultural policy closely followed foreign policy, as the RCP sought to defend the continued pursuit of its policy of 'socialism in one country' against CMEA-plans for increased co-operation and division of labour within Eastern Europe. The formulation of a policy of national autonomy meant the redirection of Romania's economic and political focus on the Soviet Union to the West, stimulating such contacts between Romania and Western countries, along with cultural ties (Gabanyi 1975: 78-9). The emphasis on national autonomy was a direct result of the RCP's persistence in following a Stalinist model of social transformation, but could not be reduced to it. The RCP's 'declaration of independence' in 1964 ushered in a new era of *overt* nationalism, on which Ceauşescu picked up when he came to power in 1965.

From the third Party Congress of 1960 onwards, Gheorghiu-Dej engaged in a policy of 'guided liberalisation' ('guided' because it was immediately made clear that liberalisation could only take place within a strictly defined framework). While Gheorghiu-Dej argued against the 'influence of foreign ideology', he simultaneously limited internal reformist tendencies by renouncing any attempt at 'reconciliation of the ideology of the revolutionary proletariat with bourgeois ideology' (cited in Gabanyi 1975: 80). In itself, 'guided liberalisation' was part of the regime's reformulation of its political image, externally in terms of its emphasis on independence, and internally in search of a 'new political formula' that could provide legitimacy (Shafir 1983: 409). Despite its controlled nature, liberalisation did decrease control over intellectual production, stimulate the political involvement of intellectuals, and create a limited discursive space for alternative visions.[126] The aim was to create 'greater ideological

[126] Membership was opened to those that formerly had been defined as politically dangerous, obtainment of party membership for intellectuals was simplified, political prisoners were released (in the period 1962-64), and important cultural figures rehabilitated. In cultural policy, the pressure on intellectuals to act as 'activists on the ideological front' decreased, as socialist realism made apparently place for 'socialist humanism' (Barbulescu 1970). Instead of repression and strict

mobility as well as moving away from primitive-dogmatic theses, without really criticising the principles of Marxist-Leninist cultural policy'. The principles of the educational value of art and culture were not abandoned and the 'cultural revolution', i.e. the creation of a New Man, remained a mainstay of the socialist project: '[t]he only new element was the search for more effective methods to reach this goal' (Gabanyi 1975: 79).

The liberal tendencies, aimed at the co-optation of intellectuals for the purposes of creating a national mass basis for Romanian Communism, evoked a highly positive response from the intellectuals, whose activities had until then been strictly subordinated to the political objectives of the Communist project. In particular humanist intellectuals were highly attracted by the new course taken by the leadership, especially as this course seemed to involve an intimate relationship between national independence, de-Stalinisation, increasing national consciousness and the allowance for some autonomy in the field of cultural production (Gabanyi 1975: 81). The positive response came especially from a young generation of writers and intellectuals, which pressed for more intellectual freedom, the decentralisation of cultural institutions, and access to higher positions within these institutions. The 'guided liberalisation' continued by the Ceauşescu-regime entailed consequences beyond its original intentions as intellectuals instigated a movement 'from below' calling for increasing transformation of the dogmatic Marxist-Leninist superstructure of society and the control of state institutions over intellectual production. The partial restitution of autonomy to the cultural field, as cultural production was tied less rigidly to political objectives, led to the strong assertion for more rights, freedom and influence on the side of the intellectuals. The demands for increased cultural freedom, the influence of intellectuals, and the abolition of censorship reached its pinnacle at the Writers' Conference of 1968, where young writers sought to find an entrance into the cultural establishment (see Culic 1999; Gabanyi 1975; Verdery 1991). As the relaxation commenced by the RCP led to fierce competition between intellectuals (in particular over the concept of the nation, and the relation between culture and politics, see Verdery 1991), it surpassed the

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supervision of the producers of culture by the Communist party, as in the 1950s, the new relationship between party-ideologues and intellectuals was one of co-optation of intellectuals and technocrats into the party (Gabanyi 1975: 79-81).

RCP's goal of mobilisation and the creation of legitimacy through the substantive value of the nation. In reaction to a perceived loss of control over the cultural field, Ceauşescu reasserted the prominence of the party and himself at the 1969 Party Congress, and in particular in 1971 in the so-called 'July Theses'. The relative autonomy of cultural production from politics was renounced, and the essential role of culture as the promoter of socialist realism was re-established.

Even if the reclamation of party control over cultural production was accompanied by a renewed subjugation of nationalism to revolutionary objectives (see Martin 2000a), the concept of the nation remained a principal element in the national Communist discourse of the RCP. The reactivation of nationalism in the 1960s resulted in two main interpretations among intellectuals: Western-oriented, universalist nationalism and particularist nationalism (Martin 2002b). Proto-chronism, which emerged most visibly in the 1970s, could be understood as belonging to the latter. Essentially proto-chronism formed a cultural theory, in which autochthonous culture was revaluated and defended against foreign imports. In its most radical version, it led to the 'intensified resuscitation of interwar indigenist arguments about the national essence', a reiteration of an essentially isolationist, closed vision of Romanian culture and society but in a rather different societal context (Verdery 1991: 168). Not only were certain concepts from the interwar debate re-introduced in the context of a society embedded in the Soviet sphere of influence and therefore gained different meanings (to begin with, isolationist nationalism was now not only directed against the West but also against Soviet imperialism and reformism), but indigenist discourse now also had to be reconciled with the main tenets of the Communist project.

In this sense, Ceauşescu's resumption of strong central control over the debate on nationalism was meant to co-opt the concept of the nation for the purposes of a developmentalist project based on Stalinism. The proto-chronist doctrine offered a cultural alibi for an isolationist and autarkic course, and contributed to the centralisation of Romanian society and the silencing of oppositional voices (cf. Martin 2002c; Verdery 1991: 169). By the mid-1970s, Ceauşescu had become enthusiastic about proto-chronism but did not yet support it explicitly. However, when the proto-chronist writer Eugen Barbu was accused of plagiarism at the end of the 1970s, Ceauşescu

backed him up, thereby tying himself openly to proto-chronism (Verdery 1991: 205, fn 40).

Part 3 Transnational discursive paradigms and Romanian discourses of modernisation

The preceding chapters consisted of a historical-empirical analysis of modernising agency, institutional patterns of modernisation, but have not systematically referred to the normative premises and cognitive prescriptions of the programmes of modernisation, as promulgated from the early 19th century onwards. Likewise, the external dimension of modernisation has not yet systematically been introduced. The purpose of this chapter is the elaboration of the normative premises and cognitive prescriptions that have formed the 'horizons of meaning' of Romanian modernisation. I will examine the competing modernising discourses in relation to what I call transnational discursive paradigms of modernity. In other words, I will compare dominant discourses in the Romanian context with those that have been the 'reference societies' or dominant extraneous interpretations of modernity that have profoundly shaped Romanian projects of modernisation.

This synchronic discursive perspective allows me to consider two aspects. First of all, a synchronic comparison enables me to identify the nature and logic inherent in projects of modernisation in Romania (thus going beyond the mere self-labelling of the actors involved). Secondly, such an approach sheds light on the extent to which the advancement of a modernising project in the local context is congruent with or derived from a dominant discourse in the transnational context, and to what extent it can be considered a re-interpretation/adaptation or a purely local creation. The conceptual reconstructions of transnational discursive paradigms serve the purpose of identifying the main understandings of modernisation in these discourses. These reconstructions are not exhaustive treatments of a certain political strand of thought but will be relatively cursory and schematic, focusing on modernising functions and the directions for modernisation that can be derived from them. Although a 'minimal' conceptual approach tends to lead to an exaggeration of differences between transnational discourses and local ones, it will allow me to identify perceptions and the extent to which these are creatively re-interpreted or adapted in the local environment more clearly (cf. Szacki 1995: 24-5). In addition, I will be able to compare competing modernising projects in

Romanian society diachronically, and to identify continuities and discontinuities. In this way, I place myself in a position where I am able to tease out similarities and dissimilarities in approaches in order to confront the primary questions raised by modernity.

7. Liberalism, romanticism and Romanian national Liberalism

7.1 Discursive paradigms in the nineteenth century: liberalism and romantic nationalism

In its place of origin, Western Europe (in particular England and France), liberalism constituted a critical and subversive political discourse against what were portrayed as illegitimate practices of political rule: the despotism of the absolutist state and the interference of religion in politics (cf. Manent 1995: 80). Notions of individual liberty, the rationality of human beings, and self-government were contrasted with the 'divine right' to political rule claimed by absolutist monarchies (cf. Held 1987: 41). Instead of a society ruled by preconceived traditions and hereditary rights and privileges, in which the larger part of human beings were socially immobile, dependent, and subject to a strict hierarchical order, liberalism proposed a society based on the autonomy of the individual and the protection of individual liberty (Russell 1946: 578). Concisely put, the liberal crisis narrative deemed unjustified two elements of the traditional order: the complete dominance of political authority by the absolute ruler (who impeded self-rule by the ruled) and the arbitrary nature of the traditional political regime (no guarantee of natural, individual rights).

As the liberal doctrine could in practical terms not provide for the direct, individual exercise of autonomy on the level of the state, the notions of representation and popular sovereignty were introduced (Wagner 2001a: 46). In historical terms, the notion of popular sovereignty was most forcefully articulated in the French Revolution, which proposed a political order based on the representation of the will of each individual, in contrast to the notions of absolute sovereignty and divine right that had existed until then. In this way, the political order was to found its legitimacy on the volition of each of its subjects, instead of on absolute sovereignty or a transcendental order (the latter was exclusively the domain of the church, and its interference in the polity was seen as impeding the full realisation of individual liberty). The modern subject became 'citizen', a position in society based on a social contract between the individual and the state. This social contract not only guaranteed social order in that it placed authority on the

level of the state, but at the same time protected individual liberty by limiting the right of the state to interfere in society. Moreover, state power was to be divided in such a way as to prevent it from becoming dominant vis-à-vis society.

The liberal, emancipatory discourse translated into political practice signified the dissolution of older, traditional social bonds. It was profoundly modern as it prioritised human self-rule. In this sense, the liberal notion of human autonomy became the central point of reference for all other modern discourses. The novel idea of individual self-rule and the professed dissolution of the unequal and ascriptive social positions of traditional society meant that any modern discourse needed to reconceptualise understandings of social order and belonging. The liberal, political, civic understanding of the polity with its 'thin' conception of the relation between the individual and the state did not remain unchallenged and found in particular in political romanticism a forceful alternative for the construction of a modern order.

In political romanticism, it was assumed that the individual, rather than an atomic, self-sufficient unit, was always already involved in pre-political relations with others, mostly conceptualised as linguistic, cultural and ethnic bonds.[127] It was these two transnational discursive paradigms that had an extended influence on conceptions of modernity all over Europe. For my purposes, I will deconstruct these two discourses into the three categories I proposed in chapter 3: cultural inspiration; Political foundations; and socio-political practices.

Normative premises

1. Cultural inspiration. In principle, classical liberalism had implications far beyond the historical situation in which it arose. The assumption of equality and the endowment of natural rights by all human beings were first promulgated against the arbitrary rule of absolutism and subjugation to the spiritual influence of the church. But the same time these principles held potential relevance far beyond the immediate circumstances. The universal validity of liberal tenets was not a matter of contingent political relevance for

[127] In practice, however, the difference was less clear-cut as the liberal notion of a entirely formal-rational order could not be sustained and had to incorporate substantive elements, as was for instance achieved by drawing on cultural-linguistic elements in the definition of the political community (see Wagner 1994).

other societies, but was explicitly asserted as universal by liberal thinkers. In their view, the liberal world view could be applied to all humanity. As long as its main tenets (rationalism, individualism, legalism) were systematically institutionalised, ever-larger parts of humanity would be able to enjoy ever-greater happiness (Wallerstein 1995: 76). Such postulates of universal applicability contained strong notions of rupture with traditional society and thus with history as such. This moment of complete reconstruction of society implied, in turn, a strong assumption of historical determinism (progress), and the convergence and homogenisation of diverse societies.

The notion of universal validity and the concomitant assumption of the essential similarity between human societies stood in strong tension with romanticist notions of the specificity of cultures, the immanent diversity of human experience, and the need for individuals and cultures to realise their own specific 'form' (Taylor 1979: 3; Taylor 1992: 28-9). The particularism or essentialism inherent in such notions parted from an understanding of the world as ultimately made up of diverse experiences and the essence of humanity in the expression of this diversity. Romanticist thought directly challenged the implications of liberal individualism, in that the liberal understanding of human beings as essentially equal and interchangeable conflicted with the singularity and peculiarity which, according to Romantic thinkers, could be the only basis of individuality as well as the collective being (cf. Schenk 1966: 15).

2. Liberty, autonomy. Essentially, the liberal project of modernisation entertained two, complementary, notions of liberty or autonomy. The first concept around which liberal thought evolved was the notion of individual liberty. The cornerstone of a modern society was deemed the individual, who was to be independent from external interference (by authority or by fellow citizens) in his/her private space or 'realm of freedom'. Such a conception of the free individual was based on the idea of the natural rights of essentially equal human beings, rights that every human being possessed irrespective of social location and origin. This conception of liberty entailed in essence a negative form of liberty, in that it understood liberty as a space of non-interference, in which the individual's actions were not restrained by other individuals or by a higher authority (Berlin 1969). The second important notion in liberalism that directly related to autonomy was the idea of popular sovereignty, which was to replace the absolute sovereignty of the absolutist monarchy. Popular sovereignty entailed the democratic

idea that sovereignty should be based in society itself, i.e., on each subject's consent in the rule of the polity (Manent 1995: 32). Both notions of liberty/autonomy hinged on the individual.

The liberal project provoked strong criticism, not only from a conservative/reactionary side, but also in the form of alternative visions of modern society. The idea that the modern polity should part from a purely individualist understanding of liberty was criticised by those alternative conceptions (manifest in particular at the end of the 18th century) that understood the individual not as a completely solitary unit but as already rooted in pre-political relationships with others (Berlin 1997: 567-9; Wagner 2001a: 44-5). In these conceptions (as found in (political) romanticism and later romantic nationalism), the autonomy of the individual was only deemed realisable through his belonging to a larger, cultural-linguistic sphere of like-minded individuals. This theory of autonomy and emancipation rejected the idea that liberty implied the complete detachment of the individual from external interference and his (partial) retreat in a private sphere. Instead, it parted from the whole or unity of social life, in which the parts (individuals) could find their true meaning and emancipation only in relation to the other parts (Taylor 1979: 1-2). The a-historical and non-social conception of the individual as stripped from its environment and as constituting a closed, autonomous unit (the rational individual) was rejected in favour of a conception of the individual as embedded in a specific human community. The essence of human nature was not deemed to lie in its rationality, basically similar everywhere, but in its uniqueness which could only be expressed in a specific 'cultural individuality' or supra-individual cultural entity (Dumont 1986: 116).[128]

3. Political and social order. Liberty, the key feature of liberalism, provided the main orientation for the reconstruction of the political and social order. For its realisation,

[128] This social vision of the individual is aptly expressed by Dumont (1983) when he discusses the notion of *Volk* as promulgated by one of the main protagonists of the romantic movement, Herder: 'We may say that, in anticipation, the basis is laid here for a right of cultures or "peoples" in contrast to the future Rights of Man. This implies a deep transformation in the definition of man: as opposed to the abstract individual, endowed with reason but stripped of all particularity, man for Herder is what he is, in all modes of thinking, feeling, and acting, by virtue of his belonging to a given cultural community' (1983: 117).

liberals envisaged a formal system of law as the main device of organising a modern society. By means of a legal system the rights of the individual could be guaranteed, as by obeying the law the citizens realised both their own freedom and that of others. A system of formal rules not only regulated the behaviour of the citizen but also codified the limits of state authority in the form of institutional rules, thereby reducing the sphere of action of the state and effectively relegating the state to the role of guardian of the political and social order. It is significant to note here, that the state did not represent any particular substantive purpose or end, so as to prevent any particular social force or individual from dominating the rest of society (cf. Manent 1995). The liberal order thus hinged on a strict separation of the state from civil society. The former was to be sovereign in its role as protector of individual rights, whereas the latter was autonomous in that the state was only to interfere with it as far as the upholding of the political order required. The relationship between civil society and the state (which ultimately represented society) was perceived as a 'social contract', which gave the state the authority to act in the interest of the individual. At the same time, the sovereignty of the state was to be limited by means of a division of powers into executive, legislative, and judiciary powers, which ensured both the responsiveness of the state to individual interests (through the legislative) and limited its authority.

What the liberal vision boiled down to was the construction of societal arrangements on the basis of a formal-legal rationality, which, as it was grounded in an understanding of individual rights as natural and universally valid, was deemed impersonal and independent of particular interests and thus immune to serve as a vehicle of these interests. In other words, modern society as envisaged by the liberals could only be based on a 'thin' concept of membership of the polity, as the only link between state and society was the former's protection of the latter's natural rights (cf. Wagner 2001a: 40). The organisation of society on the basis of formal procedures had two major advantages. The organisation of authority in such a way as to result in the 'neutralization of the political' enhanced individual negative liberty. It, however, would also lead to more positive freedom as it emancipated the domains of the economy and culture from political interference (Manent 1995: 60). Citizens would thus be free to pursue their own (economic) interests within the confines of the law, an activity that was believed to further the common good as it would make available a larger quantity of wealth in

society (a vision perhaps most famously promulgated by Locke, see Manent 1995: 69-70).

The romanticist critique to liberal understandings of modern society took issue with the 'thin' liberal concept of membership of the polity. As we saw above, the radical liberal understanding of the individual as a completely autonomous and rational subject, without social ties and incapable of constructing such ties anew, was questioned by visions in which the individual was seen as always already embedded in 'pre-political' social relations, such as those of culture, common history, language and ethnicity. A case was made not only for the importance of preserving such pre-political elements as significant in the constitution of individual identities and the understanding of his/her social surroundings, but even more so as essential factors - in the form of collective ends - in the construction of any political and social order. Thus, a socio-political order could not be based on legal procedures and economic exchange alone (or, even, not at all), but required substantive elements to provide for the unity and integration of the polity. Political romanticism questioned the impartiality and impersonality of legal formalism in defence of individuality. In particular, it criticised the primacy of rights in the foundation of modern society over that of the collective ends of the community (Rosenblum 1987: 35). The point of departure for romanticist interpretations was not the individual in the liberal understanding of an isolated human being, but the individual as embedded in its social surroundings. Therefore, the romantic vision of modern society gave primacy to substantive, common ends - inscribed in the foundation of the polity - in the form of 'thicker' social bonds than those foreseen by liberalism.

Modes of legitimation

In promulgating an absolute rupture with tradition, against the arbitrary rule and divine right of absolutist systems, liberalism promoted a political order in which authority was grounded in impersonal rules and procedures. In other words, it hinged on a legal-rational mode of legitimacy. Departing decisively from collectivist notions, the liberal order revolved around the individual, who, when free from the constraints imposed by the traditional order, would be able to fully emancipate himself and therefore be able to maximise individual freedom and development (see Bracher 1984: 17). Individual liberty was a *conditio sine qua non* for societal progress to take place, a linkage being

supposed between individual freedom and the maximisation of the public good that has perhaps best been explained by Adam Smith (see Nisbet 1980: 187-92). Whereas traditional societies were characterised by slow or little change, an absence of social mobility and a sense of fixed destiny, the liberal order would favour those elements in society that signified dynamics, the accumulation of wealth, and human emancipation (liberalism was centred around the capitalist spirit and the bourgeoisie). In this sense, liberalism held a modern, 'Promethean conception of humanity', it believed in the malleability of nature and society. The progress embodied by liberalism was a result of the construction of a new order based on formal rationality, institutionalising a thoroughgoing rationalisation of society (starting with the differentiation between state and society), in particular through the division of labour, industrialism, and the organisation and bureaucratisation of the state, developments that were in themselves believed to contribute to the resolution of social problems (socio-economic inequality) and 'just' rule.

Political romanticism differed crucially from liberalism in that it did not propose an absolute rupture with the past, its conception of the political order being based on essential aspects of a pre-political community. It was the preservation of particular, essential features of a culture that normatively underpinned the nation-state, as its 'raison d'etat'. Political romanticism or romantic nationalism posed the preservation of 'national individuality' as an absolute goal. From this it followed that legitimate rule could only be exercised by those representative of the 'national individuality'. In this, political romanticism was predominantly legitimised through both traditional and 'goal-rational' modes, in that its legitimacy was based on both the conservation of traditions and the foundation of a new political order on essentialised national characteristics.

7.3 Liberalism and romantic nationalism in Romania

The two major interpretations of modernity in nineteenth century Europe - liberalism and romanticism - provided political élites in Eastern Europe with conceptions of modern society. The historical and socio-cultural context in which 'modern' Western ideas were received and adapted in Eastern Europe partially recast the original meaning of both liberalism and romanticism, in that national liberation movements argued, on

the one hand, for wide-scale reforms and revolution, but on the other developed a definite emphasis on national traditions and particularity.

Classical liberalism in Western Europe could be understood as primarily a subversive and revolutionary mode of thought, as it called for radical change of the foundations of society on the basis of individual liberty. As mentioned above, Western liberalism envisaged the separation of state and society, a division, which was expressed in social contracts, settled by law. The conclusion of a social contract between different social groups, and between the state and society, was regarded as an essential delimitation of state authority and of facilitating the emancipation of the individual from state tyranny (Held 1987: 41-2; Vajda 1988: 341).[129] The national liberation movements in Eastern Europe equally aimed at emancipation, but as a result of historical circumstances (most importantly, the lack of clearly defined boundaries and a sovereign state) focused their emancipatory aspirations at the collective level. It is here that one sees the romanticist influence on East European modernising élites. They were not promulgating the rationalistic universalism of the Enlightenment, but rather a romantic universalism, which posed that nations were the primary 'individualities of mankind' and that universality was defined by the variety and particular characteristics of different national individualities (Walicki 1981: 74-5). The primary rights defended consisted of the right of national self-determination and the historical right of preserving one's nation and its traditions. One could make a further distinction between those 'progressivist' romantic nationalisms which emphasised the realisation of the national mission through political action and militantism, and more conservative romanticist views that understood the preservation of national uniqueness and traditions as their highest goal (Walicki 1981: 75-6). On the one hand, the predominant understanding of liberty in Eastern Europe could be regarded as a negative liberty for the collective ('national self-determination'), i.e., as the wish to emancipate the collective from

[129] One should not overstate the homogenous experience of the West in this process; for instance, one could say that the development of the state and political institutions as opposed to society was less articulated – or at least had a different character - in England and the United States than in continental Western Europe (Wagner 1990: 38; see also Wagner 1994, 2001).

external influence and constraints, and to create a collective 'private' realm.[130] On the other, East European nationalisms contained a strong component of collective positive freedom in which the cultivation of national traditions and uniqueness were regarded as the precondition for any kind of individual freedom.[131]

Romania's initial, predominantly cultural, experiences with modernity were politicised by means of a programme of modernisation at the beginning of the nineteenth century (see Marino 1995: 157-90). The national movement manifested itself increasingly in opposition to the intensified oppression and exploitation of the Romanian lands by the Ottoman empire in the 18th century. The Romanian Liberal movement was a prime example of a movement for emancipation in which liberal ideals of national self-determination and legalism were combined with the conservation of essential Romanian traditions and history. The advance guard of the Liberal movement was constituted by important Romanian historians who not only engaged in political action, but also sought to contribute to the national reawakening by the means of ethnogenesis, philology, and the gathering of national culture and folklore. Within the Romanian national movement, both conservative romanticism (with its emphasis on evolutionism and national

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[130] This is not to say that discourses of individual rights were absent from the Liberal projects in the region. Rather, they had a lower ranking in the hierarchy of values in programs of modernisation. That conceptions of individual liberty and collective self-determination never left the stage was proved by the continuously expressed aspiration for the expansion of political rights to ever larger parts of the population. See Janos 2000 for an account of national independence struggles by Liberal élites in Eastern Europe.

[131] One should add, that the historical differences of Western European 'civic' and Eastern European 'ethnic' understandings of the nation cannot be interpreted as absolute (see, for instance, Kohn 1969; Greenfeld 1992; Sugar 1994; for a recent critical treatment, see Delanty 2003). Rather, one should say that in the cases of England and France a cultural and linguistic basis of the nation was presupposed and therefore unproblematised, whereas elsewhere it became an essential element of nation-building as such (cf. Wagner and Zimmerman, 2003: 247-8, fn 6). Recently, the civic-ethnic distinction has been criticised for its imprecise description of reality and its normative implications (see Yack 1999; Wodak 1999). Political communities are deemed to always incorporate both pre-political understandings of the community as well as political ones. Moreover, in historical-empirical terms, 'civic' nations have had to seek recourse in cultural-linguistic boundaries in order to render feasible of an essentially universalistic liberal project (see Wagner 1994 and 2001).

traditions) and romantic progressivism (with an emphasis on the national mission, revolutionism and militantism) can be detected. Revolutionary Liberal forces increasingly dominated the national struggle, especially with the emergence of the 'young generation' at the end of the 1830s, which culminated in the (failed) revolutions of 1848 (see Vitcu 1997: 167). From the 1850s onwards, a more cautious and evolutionist vision took the upperhand (cf. Zub 1981). After the realisation of independence and the establishment of a sovereign state in 1859, the Liberal Party pursued its Liberal political program of modernisation as a 'doctrine of government' (Platon 1985), but never abandoned its primary preoccupation with national sovereignty and self-determination.

Crisis narrative of the Liberal project

The crisis narrative advanced by the national movement and in particular by the Liberal nationalists had its roots in Western understandings (mainly French and German) of modern society. From the liberal and romanticist currents of thought, two main concepts were derived which constituted the main components of the programme of modernisation. First, from Western liberalism and the French revolutionary programme the principle of national self-determination was taken, i.e. the natural right of nationalities to rid themselves of oppression through revolutionary upheaval. The triple motto of the French Revolution was adopted in 'accordance with its "horizon of expectations"', which meant that liberty was predominantly interpreted as national liberty (Zub 2000: 52, 1979; cf. Platon 1985: 70). Secondly, the Liberal perception of national independence found inspiration in the romantic, Herderian conception of the nation, i.e., as ultimately unique, with its own distinct language, culture and history (cf. Brown 1982: 283; Zub 1981: 121-2). Here, the nationalists also built on the national humanist tradition in which a cultural-linguistic conception of the nation had emerged.

In order to evaluate the reception and promotion of Western liberal, romanticist and revolutionary ideas in the early nineteenth century, one needs to refer to the impact of the Enlightenment and humanism firstly on cultural, and later on political writers in the Romanian Principalities in the preceding centuries. Many of the priorities that emerged in the nineteenth century political project of modernisation found their origins in claims

that had been made earlier by native political writers. In reaction to the Phanariot regime, political writers from the native Romanian nobility engaged in the denouncement of its imposed nature. In this, these political voices drew nearer to enlightened Europe, and introduced new ways of perceiving socio-political circumstances, history and historiography (Duțu 1981: 100). The arguments they developed contained important elements that were reproduced in the modernisation discourse of the nineteenth century.

In essence, two claims - one historical and one political - were raised by these political writers against the regime that was experienced as an illegitimate infringement of local autonomy. Firstly, the historical argument was made claiming historical rights on the basis of the continuity of the Romanian presence in the territory of Wallachia and Moldavia. New trends in Southern European historiography had resulted in the replacement of historical writing in the form of chronicles of events with an ethno-genealogical analysis of the origins of peoples. In the case of the Romanians, their origins were 'discovered' in the Roman conquest of Dacia in the 2nd and 3rd centuries (Duțu 1981: 132; Kellog 1990; Stoicescu 1986). Based on this argument of common origins and historical continuity, two additional claims were made. First of all, the political writers claimed the cultural belonging of the Romanians to Western European civilisation, which was, in turn, counterposed with the oriental culture. The latter was portrayed as imposed by the Phanariot regime and the Ottoman empire and was therefore not indigenous, as Romanian culture was historically based on Latinity (cf. Georgescu 1971: 40). Political writers thus also constructed the cultural unity of the Romanian lands - as their cultures, ethnic origins, and history were the same - which, when politicised, could justify political unification. In other words, the political writers represented 'Romania' or 'Dacia' as a national individuality in need of emancipation.

Secondly, the political claim was made for the independence of the Romanian Principalities on the basis of the political rights it had enjoyed before the Phanariot regime. Here, the restoration of limited local autonomy that allegedly had existed before 1711 was referred to, the writers being in favour of political independence and local self-rule. Ideas of national emancipation and historical rights were initially carried by political writers from the Romanian upper nobility or the higher clergy. By the end of the eighteenth century, the self-assertion of lower ranks of the nobility as well as some

bourgeois writers became more explicit (Georgescu 1971: 52-3). In contrast to the higher social classes, the lower added a social claim to the reformist ones, thereby introducing the social question, i.e. referring to the social predicament of the common people. The emancipation of the people meant not only the emancipation of the nation, but also the emancipation of the peasantry from the exploitation in feudalism (Duțu 1981: 103).

The nationalist movement pointed in its critique of the existing political and social order at two elements deemed illegitimate: the impediment of the natural course or progress of history by the oppression by the Ottoman empire, and the denial of natural and historical rights of self-rule of the Romanian principalities. The natural course of history implied the return of the Romanian nation to the European 'family of nations' (with which it was connected through the Latin basis of Romanian culture), unaffected by the oriental, Byzantine sphere of influence. The idea of Europe as a more advanced, progressive civilisation and stable order was sharply confronted with the stagnation, primitiveness and disorder of the Ottoman empire (Georgescu 1971: 41-2, 88; Marino 1995: 157-190). In addition, the natural place of the Romania Principalities in Western civilisation could be realised as soon as the original right to self-rule was regained, as it had existed prior to the Phanariot regime.

In sum, the nationalist movement pleaded for the *restoration* of an earlier existing situation. Only such a 'restitutio' would permit a cultural and political revival which was understood as a prerequisite for the full emancipation of the Romanian nation (Zub 2000: 55). Such 'discursive weapons' provided justifications for the project of modernisation and empowered the native élites in their struggle for national autonomy. The main contrast with Western liberalism that significantly influenced the overall pattern of modernisation was the fact that the Romanian national movement justified a new order predominantly on the basis of the natural and historical rights of the Romanian nation/collective to self-rule. The right to collective freedom took thus precedence over individual rights, such as socio-political equality (cf. George 1998: 47; Platon 1985: 72). In other words, the dominant issue in Romanian national Liberalism regarded the shift from Ottoman suzerainty to national sovereignty, rather than from absolutist rule to popular sovereignty.

The Romanian interpretation of national Liberalism: commonality and difference

Romanian Liberalism was in essence a synthesis of Western liberalism and romanticist nationalism, adapted to the circumstances of nation and state-building in the Romanian Principalities. In order to place in relief significant differences with Western liberalism– in the form of a different hierarchy of values and priorities – and underline romanticist tendencies I will again use the conceptual map as introduced in chapter 3. I will deal with cultural-political inspiration, political foundations, and those of the socio-political order in Romanian national Liberalism.

1. Cultural-political inspiration. The modernisation programme of the Romanian Liberals contained a dual logic in its cultural orientation as it comprised both a strong element of emulationism or mimetism (of socio-political institutions and ideas as developed in Western Europe), and therefore the partial acceptance of the universal validity of Western models, yet simultaneously embodied a form of particularism or essentialism. Modernity as introduced in the Romanian Principalities ultimately resulted in a persistent tension between the preservation of the particular and the traditional or historical on the one hand, and the universal and the desire for synchronism with other cultures on the other.[132] The critique of the Liberal project that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century stemmed predominantly from a more radical particularist interpretation of modernisation (see chapter 4). The Liberals themselves promoted a moderate view that combined a positive stance towards Western modernity and its institutions, and at the same incorporated the idea that the polity thus created needed to represent the 'national genius', the historically evolved particularity or individuality. In their main intellectual activity, the gathering and narration of national history, the Liberal revolutionaries attempted to firmly establish the Romanian nationality and to narrate the ethno-genesis of the Romanian people. In other words, they tried to create a strong foundation for collective autonomy. At the same time, this 'invented' national

[132] Cf. Zub 1981: 91. It is worth repeating here Kaya's observation in the context of Turkish modernity (see also chapter 3, fn 44): '... the view of modernity as a universal civilization created a contradiction within Kemalism, that of autonomy versus universality; the latter would assimilate the former if it was achieved' (2004: 46). The understanding of autonomy as the ability to set one's own rules, based on one's own relation to the world, is always in potential tension with an understanding of society as based on universal values, valid in any temporal and spatial context.

culture needed to be worthy of integration into the European or universal culture (see Corbea 1978: 184; Zub 1981: 91-98). Thus, the creation of an exclusive national culture was not interpreted as the need to detach Romania from Western or world culture, or the need of an isolationist position, but was deemed instead a process that was firmly tied the progress of humanity. A clear example of this dual attitude towards modernisation was the work of one of the main Liberal protagonists, Mihail Kogălniceanu. Although he acknowledged emulation of the West as imperative if Romania was to become modern and civilised, the transformation of Romanian society should be coterminous with its own national traditions and culture.[133] Kogălniceanu argued for evolutionary, organicist reforms which would lead to the adoption of essential elements of civilisation (equality, education, legal rules), whereas it simultaneously allowed the national culture ('national specificity') to improve and form the foundation of the modern national state. The essence was national history: 'history is the measure or the meter by which you may find out if a nation makes progress or goes backwards" (cited in: Schifirneț 1991: 108; cf. Zub 1981: 251-2).

2. Political foundations. As most historiographic sources attest, the dominant locus of nineteenth century Romanian modernisation was national self-determination. In contrast to Western liberalism, where the primary objective was to liberate the individual from the constraints of despotism and the political interference of religion, the Romanian Liberals adapted the narrative of liberation to their own historical conditions. Whereas in Western Europe one could speak of the pursuit of negative liberty for the individual, in the Romanian case negative liberty became, *mutatis mutandis*, predominantly an

[133] Kogalniceanu remarked: 'Romanians by their geographic, political, moral, ethnographic position have a greater duty than any other nation not to remain estranged from everything that this century's glory and power is creating. Slight and weak, they cannot be great and powerful but through civilization, that is through their country's intellectual and moral improvement' (cited in: Schifirneț 1991: 105). Simultaneously, he argued that 'a fundamental law of the country must be an indigenous plant, an expression of the country's customs and deeds, but because the nation's laws have been severed from the past and are no longer based upon the old laws that guarded our nationality, we would want to go back to those institutions whose origin is in our land and whom, having had with us for five centuries, we do not wish to adapt to this epoch's progress and efforts' (idem., 107).

aspiration for the liberation of the collective from external constraints.[134] Self-determination for the collective logically had to precede the question of political rights for individual members of the polity, as one first needed to define the boundaries of the polity in order to claim the right to set one's own rules.[135]

At the same time, the collective for which negative liberty was claimed was not understood as a purely political collective, but as a collectivity based on substantive elements: a common history, territory, and cultural and linguistic homogeneity. A romanticist notion of the collective, i.e., as a distinct historical and cultural entity, which needed to be preserved, was highly present in the programme for modernisation. The claim for independence was not merely made in the name of a political entity, consisting of an aggregation of individuals living on a specific territory (the people); the people here consisted of a specific social group, that shared particular cultural traits (the Daco-Romanian culture) and it was in the name of the preservation of this specificity that emancipation was claimed. Therefore, the modernising programme of the national movement not only contained strong claims for political liberation in the form of independence, but also for the unification of the Romanian people in one nation-state which could ensure the continuity of Romanian history and culture.[136]

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[134] Liberalism in Romania was less the outcome of an internal theoretical debate on the desirable form of a future society than the result of the adoption by political élites of a Western doctrine for the specific purpose of the realisation of national self-determination, thus for purposes of political action (George 1998: 45).

[135] That the leaders of the national, revolutionary movement saw this clearly is for instance attested by the observation of Nicolae Bălcescu, one of the most important protagonists of the 1848 revolutions: 'To my mind, the problem of nationality comes before that of liberty... Liberty can be easily obtained once lost, but not nationality' (in: Prodan 1971: 375). '[Liberty within the country] cannot be achieved unless there is liberty from without, freedom from foreign rule' (in: Paşcu 1977: 44).

[136] The preoccupation with the origins or ethno-genesis of the Romanian people and the establishment of a homogeneous culture is exemplified by the great activity in the fields of history and philology, carried out by prominent members of the national movement, such as Mihail Kogălniceanu and Nicolae Bălcescu (Zub 1981). The former expressed the primary importance of a national history in his inaugural speech at the Mihăileană Academy in Iaşi, 1843: '... The necessity for the history of our fatherland is undisputed for the protection of our rights against foreign nations. Not having a history, every hostile nation can say to us... "Your beginning is unknown, the name

3. Socio-political practices. The primary foci of the Romanian political and cultural programme of modernisation - independence and unification - determined the way in which the modernising élites confronted the question of the reconstruction of the socio-political order. The programme hinged on a dual logic as it was based on a strong rupture with the past as embodied by the legal formalism and constitutionalism found in the West, but at the same time regarded continuity with the past as its main objective. The Romanian Liberals promulgated the idea, as it had emerged in the West, that the best way to found a stable and just political order was by means of its codification in law and its institutionalisation in formal, impersonal structures. A polity based on constitutional rule, the limitation of political power, and a social contract was deemed to further the common good, whereas political rule based on tyranny and despotism would induce arbitrariness and corruption (Georgescu 1971: 104-5). The importation of these institutions was nevertheless primarily valued from the point of view of self-rule rather than for internal reasons of reform, i.e., the introduction of representative institutions and wide-scale socio-economic reforms.[137] The thrust of the majority of political arguments made in the early 19th century was the restoration of local princely rule, and the international acknowledgement of the constitutional independence of the Romanian state, freed from Ottoman suzerainty and Russian tutelage. The political representation of the population and the extension of political and social rights were much less prominent and often considered dangerous to the stability of the polity. Arguments for the establishment of political autonomy and the reform of political rule concentrated on autonomy for the local boyar classes. It was only in the early 20th century that the extension of political rights to the entire (male) population became part of the official Liberal programme.

One curtailment of Liberalism was therefore formed by the boundaries set on the full rights and participation of the major part of the Romanian population because of fear of unrest and disorder (these boundaries were equally present in the 'sectarian liberalisms'

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which you bear is not yours, neither is the land which you live on..." ' (cited in: Treptow 1997: 241).

[137] Here, the fact that the Liberal movement was dominated by the nobility whereas the bourgeoisie constituted a negligible social force during most of the nineteenth century may well have played an important part.

of Western Europe, cf. Brown 1982). A further restriction in the potentially universal scope of liberalism was the essentially ethnic definition of citizenship. If classical liberalism promulgated a vision of the individual which was essentially stripped from all substantive characteristics other than natural rights, the Romanian Liberals understood citizenship in a predominantly 'thick', ethnic sense, tying the rights and obligations that resulted from citizenship to the status of nativeness (cf. Georgescu 1971: 174-5). This meant that the Romanian Liberals explicitly understood substantive values to be the basis of the political order. The state needed to set clear boundaries between those that belonged to the polity (ethnic Romanians) and those that did not. It needed above all to protect the nation and stimulate political, economic and cultural development in its name. The main object of modernisation was ultimately the nation as a collective, instead of the individual of classical Western liberalism. The state, in turn, was the expression of this collective in its role as defender of the national interest and as the main instrument of socio-economic modernisation (see chapter 4). The latter was in strong contrast with the formal relegation of socio-economic functions to the sphere of civil society as found in classical liberalism (cf. Platon 1985: 78).

Legitimation of the Liberal project

The Liberal project was underpinned by various modes of legitimation, the principle mode being 'derived' legitimation, based on the embodiment of progress as conceptualised in the European civilisational model and socio-political institutions. Through reference to the modern nature of European societies, the Liberals exposed imperfect elements in Romanian society (the lack of an advanced, authentic Romanian culture, the absence of self-rule, Byzantine traditions) invoking an inferiority complex in respect to Western Europe. In this manner, everything non-European came to be associated with retrogradation, the impediment of progress, and as against the national interest (Marino 1995: 163). The West-European political form, the nation-state, was invoked as the only solution that could raise the Romanian people to a higher cultural plane. The derived nature of this mode of legitimation necessitated the relegitimation of the Western model in the Romanian context. This could, partially, be achieved by referring to formal rationality as a superior principle for arranging society. Only partially, however, because Western universalism itself posed a threat towards national

peculiarities. Kogălniceanu, for instance, clearly understood that blind imitationism involved the steady erosion of national forms (cf. Schifirneț 1991: 106). Relegitimation therefore required supplementary modes of legitimation, related to the local context. The most significant of these modes was provided by traditional legitimation. The Liberals historically justified their condemnation of foreign domination of the Romanian lands by referring to the Romanian continuity in this geographical space. One source of common Romanian origins was found in Latin origins, both in terms of cultural and linguistic elements. In this way, one could defend both political unification as well as point to a common heritage with Western Europe, as Romania was an 'island of Latinity in a Slav sea' (an identity rediscovered by the Transylvanian Latinist School in the 18th century) (Boia 2001: 34-5; Georgescu 1971: 171-2). Furthermore, the common origins of the Romanian people could be traced back beyond Roman times by claiming descent from the native Dacians, by which the Romanians could claim an uninterrupted presence in the Romanian lands for about two millennia (Georgescu 1971: 172). Traditional legitimacy was not only invoked by the claim to historical continuity, but also by the historical right to which the Romanians pretended in terms of independence, as the principalities had been relatively autonomous prior to the increasing subordination to the Ottoman empire in the 18th century (Pascu 1977: 30). The explicit nationalist foundation of the political order comprised both a form of traditional legitimacy, i.e., the nation-state would be built on age-old traditions and their conservation, and a form of goal-rationality. The latter consisted of legitimation on the basis of the embodiment of an absolute value, which in the case of nationalism is the principle of popular representation. Through the claim of exclusive representation of the Romanian people, national Liberalism justified its rule and project as representative of the general will of the people and of the ethnic nation. Both aspects stood in strong contrast with previous forms of rule, which had represented foreign powers and particular interests.

A supplementary mode of legitimation that fortified the indigenous relevance of the project as well as the role of the Liberals was what may be called charismatic legitimation. The Liberals claimed a messianic role in identifying the goals and strategies of the project of modernisation, as they were knowledgeable about Western rationalism and the liberal philosophy of progress. Partly, this could be understood as a

main element of Enlightenment thinking, that put such a strong emphasis on reason and education, creating a large gap between 'enlightened' intellectuals' and the masses of the population (Prodan 1971: 287). The intellectuals and other 'enlightened' political actors were then the only ones that could lead the way to a modern society.

7.4 The strategic-institutional programme of Liberalism

The critique on the *ancien regime*, the normative premises of the new order and their justifications contain the 'superstructure' of the Liberal nationalist programme, but in themselves are not unequivocally related to distinct institutional counterparts which would make up such a new order. In other words, the normative premises as found in the Liberal discourse do not translate directly into strategic components for political action, but could potentially be translated into different institutional constellations. It is therefore warranted to look closer at how the Romanian Liberal nationalists perceived of their programme of modernisation in terms of actual institutional constellations. I will try to capture the Liberal-nationalist perceptions by using the conceptual scheme introduced in chapter 3, in which institutional-strategic ideas are divided in ideas relating to societal progress; national self-determination; and political representation and control.

1. Societal progress. As long as the Liberal offensive retained a subversive character, the language of the various proclamations, memoranda, and draft constitutions predominantly dealt with the issues of unification, national independence and forms of native rule. The liberal-minded élites did include claims for social equality and the abolishment of privileges in their programmes from the beginnings of the nineteenth century onwards, but these remained secondary to the goal of national independence and unification. Social critique was mainly directed against the parasitical nature of the upper landowning classes. This critique referred not only to their exploitation of the landed masses, but also to their own unproductive nature and obstruction of the emancipation of the trading and merchant classes (Georgescu 1971: 98-9, 102). The abolishment of the privileges of the nobility and the acknowledgement of the rights and

social functions of the industrious classes constituted the initial components of a (still immature) programme for socio-economic change.

The political programmes for socio-economic change were articulated more explicitly after the unification of 1859, and in particular after 1866, when the two major political parties were formed (cf. Iacob 1995; Platon 1985). The nature, rhythm, and scope of socio-economic change became the object of debates between the newly formed Liberal and Conservative Parties. These debates were not merely important for eventual political action (in terms of the reconstruction of domestic political and socio-economic institutions) by one of the various post-independence governments. The standpoints taken in these debates also evolved around understandings of how to substantively realise the main political objective, national autonomy. After the realisation of formal independence, the preoccupations and aspirations of the political actors turned inwards. In this, the continuing hierarchisation of political and social objectives in the modernising programmes of the Liberals as well as in those of their adversaries became clear. The Liberal programme clearly advocated the emulation of Western liberal industrialism, but, at the same time, adapted the Western liberal programme to the Romanian context. The Liberal programme aimed above all for national economic independence, and therefore foresaw an active stimulation of the national bourgeoisie, the protection and stimulation of national industry, and the minimalisation of foreign influence in domestic industry (Brown 1982: 282; Iacob 1995: 231; see also Saizu 1985: 174-9). In this, the Liberal understanding of political economy clearly demonstrated a strong affinity with Listian arguments for protectionism and 'infant-industry' based state interference. Free-trade doctrines were not however rejected on a normative basis, but were deemed unsuitable for the contemporary situation in Romania (Antonescu 1915: 55-6).

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, protectionism as an ideology of modernisation was perhaps most convincingly articulated by two economists, who nevertheless diverged on its precise significance in the Romanian context: the liberal economist Petre Aurelian, who advocated a policy of protectionism towards home industry and handicrafts, and his most important intellectual adversary A.D. Xenopol (close to the conservative Junimea society, but a self-defined liberal economist), who favoured the protection and stimulation of larger industry (Hitchins 1994: 85-9; Montias

1978: 59-60). Despite divergent opinions on whether to skip developmental stages or to start at the bottom, both agreed on an essentially determinist and singular reading of the history of modern society, i.e. socio-economic change and development required the emulation of the Western pattern. The most important synthesis of the Liberal perception was formulated in the 1920s, when the economist Ştefan Zeletin defended an interfering and dirigiste role for the state class ('the bourgeois oligarchy') (Zeletin 1925; see also Chirot 1978b). His 'neoliberalism' in reality signified the suspension of liberalism's emancipatory objectives (democracy, social equality) in order to arrive at its material, and especially its political aims.

2. Collective self-determination. The political struggle of the modernising élites centred around one dominant objective: the political independence of the Romanian Principalities or the realisation of national self-determination. In anticipation (and preparation) of its realisation, the aspirations expressed in political discourse referred predominantly to collective autonomy (external sovereignty) and self-rule. The aspiration for negative liberty on the level of the collectivity was expressed in the wish to rid the Romanian Principalities of the Phanariot regime, and of other forms of interference in local affairs. In this, the nineteenth century modernisers built on ideas passed to them by earlier generations. Political independence was justified by means of the political rights the Romanian Principalities had enjoyed under Ottoman suzerainty before the Phanariot regime, in other words, for a restoration of an earlier existing international status. This prior existing autonomy was emphasised in the so-called 'theory of capitulations', which stated that the Romanians had subjected themselves voluntarily to Ottoman suzerainty for reasons of military security (Georgescu 1971: 153-4).[138] The theory served the purpose of reclaiming older rights and as an accusation of the Greek Phanariot regime for violating the country's historically formed political rights (Prodan 1971: 352). The call for independence implied the demand for local self-rule, which in the early nineteenth century was mostly understood as a restoration of the rule of the native upper nobility. From the 1820s onwards, however, this 'traditionalist'

[138] This 'theory of capitulations' was even taken up in the Convention of Paris 1858, in which the relation between the Principalities and the Ottoman empire was settled. The 'capitulations' referred back to treaties concluded between the Principalities and the Ottoman empire in the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries (Antonescu 1915: 35-6, fn 4).

claim was increasingly challenged by the liberal-minded modernising élites. Nevertheless, the call for boundary-setting in the realisation of self-rule was shared by both factions. Thus, in this shared vision, native self-rule implied the management of one's own affairs, but also the impediment and exclusion of others - non-natives within the polity - from exercising these rights. Therefore, political programmes often included claims against rights and privileges for foreigners, in particular the Greeks.[139]

The national question was not understood as the simple right to self-rule of the existing political units, it was also expressed in terms of national unification and the restoration of Daco-Romania. Therefore, the corollary of independence as negative collective freedom was recognised in the realisation of 'a free and independent fatherland for all the scattered members of their nation' (as in the declaration of the national movement of 1838, *Act de unire şi independenţă* (Act of union and independence), in: Bodea 1970: 46). The revolutionary struggle took as its guiding principle the idea of 'Dacia' or 'Daco-Romania', to be realised in the future in the form of a nation-state comprising all those of the Romanian ethnicity. In this way, not only was a cultural programme of the nation promoted (as had been the case with earlier generations), but also a political programme of national unification, in which the nation begot a 'historic mission' and expressed the 'genius and spirit' of the people (Duţu 1981: 164; cf. Zub 1981). Unity thus signified political emancipation, and was seen as the only viable way in which the Romanians could achieve real political independence[140]

3. Political representation and control. The national question in itself largely consisted of external constraints towards national autonomy. It regarded the relationship of a self-defined nation (an 'imagined community') with the international environment. However, any (temporary) solution of the national question tends to bring into focus the internal sphere. When sovereignty is transferred from foreign hands to native ones, the question arises of how and by whom internal rule is to be executed. This political

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[139] See for example the title of one of the political programs of the 1820s: *Indreptarea ţării (după cele) ce a pătimit ţara a la 1821, de la străini* (Recovery of the country (after all) it endured in 1821 on part of the foreigners) (Prodan 1971: 353).

[140] The *Act de unire şi independenţă* of 1838 included the pragmatic argument that 'with a divided territory and scattered as they were it would be impossible for the Romanians to oppose single-handed the powerful empires which surrounded them' (Bodea 1970: 46).

question - of political form, control, and representation - therefore constitutes a vital element in any political project for the reconstruction of society on the basis of self-rule. At the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, native rule was mostly understood as entailing the rule of either a native prince or the native nobility. The first of these pointed to enlightened absolutism or constitutional monarchy (counter-posed to the 'social anarchy' of democracy and the oligarchic tendencies of aristocratic rule, Georgescu 1971: 104-7), whereas the second was the claim of the upper nobility to political rule, and contained elements of traditional rule (continuity in the privileges of the higher strata) as well as forms of constitutionalism and the rule of law. The latter was, for example, articulated in the concept of the 'aristocratic republic', promulgated in the early nineteenth century (see Georgescu 1971: 112-3; Prodan 1971: 349), and repeated in other statements of the upper nobility. Such limited conceptions of reform were however increasingly criticised, in particular in the period between the establishment of formal native rule in 1822 and the promulgation of the Organic Regulations. The more moderate forms of critique argued against an overly restricted understanding of the upper classes eligible for political rule and therefore favoured an opening of public office to lower ranks. In this, they touched upon the question of political rule but avoided that of (popular) representation. Claims for access to political power were mostly made in concomitance with arguments in favour restricting the legislative and executive rights of ruling princes, by means of legalism, constitutional rule and the division of power among various institutions. Political rule was however to be restricted to an eligible élite, as political rights were to be granted on the basis of social criteria, and in more radical cases on the basis of economic criteria[141] (Georgescu 1971: 117).

[141] The 'free people', which the political institutions were to represent, were perceived as those with a certain amount of property. The extension of the political élites went only so far as to include the second and third ranks of the landowning nobility, and the political institutions only represented these social strata (as in the 'Constitution of the *Cărvunari*' (carbonari) of 1822, mentioned in: Prodan 1971: 354-6).

The question of political representation was however placed on the agenda by some parts of the lower nobility, who, from the early 1820s[142] onwards, began to introduce more radical concepts into their political programmes. They referred to popular sovereignty and enlarged political representation, arguing for the opening up of the political nation to the dependent, non-propertied strata (see Prodan 1971: 356-67). Such ideas of popular sovereignty emerged most visibly with the increased political assertion of the generation that would dominate the Liberal, revolutionary movement from the end of the 1830s onwards (the period in which a division took place within the *partida națională* between reformist and revolutionary forces, cf. Bodea 1970: 40, 57, 96; Platon 1985: 72).[143] Equality and extended political rights formed an integral part of the revolutionary programmes of 1848 (cf. Constantinescu and Pascu 1971; Seton-Watson 1934: 229), although emancipatory ideas were always regarded as of secondary importance in relation to the main objective of national liberation.[144] After the main goal of the modernising forces was fulfilled - the formation of an independent nation-state - the questions of political representation and the extension of political rights came to the fore in the political debates between the Liberals and the Conservatives. Whereas the Liberals in general promulgated the need for the stimulation of participation in political life and extension of the franchise, the Conservatives adhered to an 'élite theory', i.e., the limitation of participation in public life to the upper classes (Iacob 1995: 233, 237). These conflicts continued within the overall framework of the constitutional monarchy, which was in itself a compromise between the Liberals and the Conservatives.

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[142] It is indeed in the early 1820s that the significant popular uprising of Tudor Vladimirescu took place, under invocation of social and political rights for the people.

[143] The older generation within the National Party was considered defeatist by the younger generation, as it was not ready to pursue revolutionary objectives, but adhered to reformist goals (Bodea 1970: 40).

[144] As one of the most important revolutionary leaders, Nicolae Bălcescu, pronounced in 1848: 'To my mind, the problem of nationality becomes before that of liberty... Liberty can be easily obtained once it is lost, but not nationality'. And later, in 1850: 'It is only when the holy war rids the nation from the pressure of foreigners and returns to it its liberty and unity, that the people's assembly, *the Constituent Assembly* will be able to carry out unhampered all the political and social reforms it requires and set up the domination of democracy, the domination of the people by the people' (cited in: Prodan 1971: 375, italics in original).

Interlude: Romanian Liberalism and its discontents

The two major ideological strands that crystallised in the middle of the nineteenth century are often placed opposite one another. The liberal strand is identified with the revolutionary 1848 movement (*paşoptişti*) and progressive and Europeanist ideas, whereas the conservative strand (and its traditionalist offspring) is purported to embody the old feudal landowning nobility, and retrograde and traditionalist ideas (see, for instance, Bodea 1970; Deletant 1998; Georgescu 1971; Hitchins 1994; Zeletin 1925). Whereas particular elements of the two political visions and actions justify such an identification, at the same time one can notice an ideological consensus on the main priority in the nineteenth modernisation project, political unity and independence. I want to suggest that the strands of 'modernism' and 'traditionalism' did not constitute an antinomy of modern and anti-modern or reactionary visions, but entailed different readings - and therefore ultimately different assimilations - of the Western modern experience.

It was indeed the liberal interpretation that provided the central point of reference of Romania's experience with modernity in the nineteenth century. As such, liberalism set the tone of what modernity was about and which of its elements were relevant for the Romanian situation. The liberal interpretation could be understood as a form of 'particularisation of the universal'[145] in that it promoted the assimilation of universal patterns of modernisation, but adapted and subordinated them to the objective of collective self-determination and integration. The significance of this 'particularisation of the universal' in Romanian modernisation is notable for the fact that emerging critiques of the liberal interpretation did not criticise particularist aspects (self-determination), but rather emulationist ones (assimilation of universal patterns). The liberal argument that to consolidate collective autonomy Western patterns of modernisation needed to be accommodated in the Romanian context were refuted by critical strands of thought that challenged the universal validity of Western patterns of modernisation as such and re-evaluated and recast endemic traditions into indigenous modes of modernisation. In this, the critical strands always referred to the liberal

[145] On this concept, see Robertson 1992.

understanding and more often than not produced a diametrically opposed vision of modernity, without however fundamentally criticising the need for collective autonomy.

The severe critique of the Liberal political and cultural programme of modernisation was initiated by the so-called *Junimea* society, a cultural society founded in Iaşi in 1863. It was here that the most critical and influential objections to the Liberal project were formulated. Within the cultural framework constituted by the members of Junimea, which represented more of a critical spirit than a well-defined programme (Zub 1985: 113-4), the Liberal project - and the Westernising current as a whole - was rejected for its 'emulationism'. Liberalism was reproached for its hasty and uncritical adoption of models, institutions and ideas that had been formulated elsewhere and in a radically different context (the Junimists especially criticised the adoption of the intellectual heritage of revolutionary France).[146] The theoretical underpinning of the critique was provided by Titu Maiorescu, the leading personality in Junimea, by means of the thesis of 'formele fără fond', meaning forms without substance.[147] This thesis highlighted the discrepancy between the extremely rapid adoption of a superstructure of Western, bourgeois 'forms' of civilisation on the foundations of a late feudal society (Marino 1995: 191; Ornea 1996: 54). Maiorescu reproached the 1848-generation for their uncritical, superficial and mechanical adoption of Western structures and ideas, which, according to him, formed an antinomy within the Romanian context. Whereas Western ideas and institutions had been formulated by an ascending bourgeoisie and reflected a situation of rising social forces in a changing society, in Romania such phenomena had been largely absent. The generation of 1848 had therefore imported 'forms' from the West which it did not fully grasp, and which had no real significance within a society that was of a largely rural nature. In other words, the Liberals had only imported the superficial aspects they could perceive, without being aware of their deep

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[146] As Adrian Marino has pointed out, the Junimist critique consisted of a generalisation of critical ideas that already existed in Romanian society and which, moreover, had a strong affinity with European post-revolutionary thinking in general (Marino 1995: 191-8).

[147] This idea was first articulated in Maiorescu's article 'În contra direcţiei de astăzi în cultura română' (Against today's direction of Romanian culture), published in 1868 in Junimea's literary journal *Convorbirii Literare*.

historical roots and without which they could not really exist (Stahl 2002). The implications of such a critique on the Liberal project of modernisation were far-reaching. Whereas the Liberal conception of modernisation only acknowledged a singular pathway for Romanian society to follow, i.e., the modern Western model, the Junimists re-evaluated local traditional culture. Here they pleaded for an evolutionary model of social change[148] to replace the Liberal models' revolutionary, voluntaristic tendencies (as demonstrated not only in the revolutions of 1848, but also in the Liberals' aspiration to drastically reconstruct Romanian society). In other words, the Junimist critique emphasised the priority of organic development, in which national institutions and culture could develop in a natural way. Revolutionary upheavals would only disrupt this natural course and introduce anomalies in the development of society. Instead of emulating foreign structures, one needed to build on natively accumulated experience. The Junimists thus underlined cultural specificity and originality, against the explicit imitational tendencies of the Liberals (Corbea 1985: 104).

It is not the purpose here to elaborate on the nuances and divergence in opinion and approach that could be found in the highly diverse Junimist circle. What is of importance in the discussion of Romanian patterns and interpretations of modernisation is the critique of Liberal modernisation that was provided by the Junimists and the continuing importance of a conception of constructing modern society on the basis of traditional and local experience and culture. The Junimists essentialised a discourse of particularism or cultural exclusivism, in which the uncritical following of a model deemed universally valid was renounced in favour of local experience and creativity. In other words, the Junimists exposed the tension in Romanian culture between Western 'forms' and autochthonous 'substance' (cf. Marino 1995: 69). In this, the Junimists did not reject the primary objective of the Liberals - the creation and sustenance of an independent nation-state - they disagreed on the means and the way in which these means should be implemented. The Junimist critique provided the basis for formulations of alternative conceptions of modernisation in Romania, which revaluated

[148] The Junimists' thesis of 'forms without substance' further rested on German organicist historicism and more specifically the historical school of law, which had articulated the idea of national specificity in legal principles against the universalistic principle of natural law, dominant in Enlightenment thought (Ornea 1996: 54-5).

- to varying degrees - national traditions and social structures. The tenor of the Junimists' thesis, the tension created by the introduction of Western ideas and structures, formed the starting point for currents of thought that equally criticised the Liberal project for not being in harmony with traditional Romanian society (cf. Călinescu 1988: 511; Hitchins 1994: 60). I will merely provide a cursory account of those critical currents here. One strand of thought that criticised the introduction of industrialisation into Romania and 'unmasked' the Liberal élite as exploiting the peasant population for its own purposes was the so-called cultural current of Sămănătorism (derived from *sămănător*, sower), centred around the literary review *Sămănătorul* (Treptow 1996: 198). Its most significant proponent was the historian Nicolae Iorga[149], who pleaded for originality and the articulation of the national spirit, and therefore criticised cultural imports (Călinescu 1988: 511; Daskalov: 1997: 164-165). In essence, the sămănătorists argued for the priority of cultural unity over political unity (Călinescu 1988: 511). In their view, the political structures established by the Liberals were artificial and abstract importations. A nation's emancipation could only take place through its cultural constitution and, as Romania's traditions were essentially based on social life in the agricultural village, values that reflected such a form of social life should form the basis of an original culture (see Hitchins 1994: 67-71). A contemporary critical current was so-called Poporanism or populism, of which the most important spokesman was Constantin Stere. Also populism regarded rural life as authentic whereas urban life was deemed an imported, unnatural phenomenon. Stere perceived the small-scale peasant as the pinnacle of Romanian society and economy, a society that could be an alternative to Western capitalism and industry (Hitchins 1994). While the sămănătorists argued predominantly for a cultural and moral revival, the populists formulated a more substantial alternative to Western modernisation in that they pleaded for a 'rural democracy'. The populists sought political representation of the peasantry, land reforms

[149] Iorga, a prominent historian, was one of the central figures in the emerging critique of the heritage of the French Revolution. In a similar way as Maiorescu and the poet Mihai Eminescu, Iorga pleaded for a re-evaluation of tradition, the restoration of indigenous values and criticised excessive rationalism (Zub 2000: 85). He advocated organic evolutionism, condemning the French Revolution as a 'revolution of rationalism' and as being 'too abstract to lead to something useful' (Zub 2000: 87, 83-106).

in order to improve the peasantry's socio-economic situation, and access to education for the masses (Hitchins 1994: 72).

For my purposes, it is less important to deal at great length with the specific nature and variations within the critical strands that emerged in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In relation to the dominant project of modernisation, these critiques did not constitute a political alternative at that moment in time. Nevertheless, as we will see in the following chapter, these critiques did provide the basis for more radical strands of essentialism, which would ultimately replace the dominant Liberal discourse.

8. Interwar Fascism and Romanian anti-liberal discourse

8.1 The emergence of anti-liberal thought

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century witnessed the emergence of various strands of thought in which liberal modernity was assessed in a highly negative way (among others, cultural critique, nationalism, social Darwinism, fascism, and revolutionary syndicalism, see Bracher 1984). Instead of sharing the liberal optimism of comprehensive human progress, many thinkers questioned key tenets of liberalism as well as of Enlightenment thought in general. The rationality of the individual, the individualist assumption of the human being as a pre-social entity, and the harmonious and progressive nature of industrialisation and democratisation were increasingly submitted to critical assessment. Rationality was perceived as at best only one aspect of human nature, whereas irrationalism, emotions and passion were regarded as not only more meaningful, but also as increasingly endangered by the diffusion of rationalism. In this, the natural social bonds between members of a community were deemed in a process of dissolution as a result of the encroachment of 'modern society' on 'authentic' life (cf. Herf 1984: 13; see also Bracher 1984: 16-38). Rather than understanding industrial society as the harbinger of human harmony and social well-being, it was understood by anti-liberal thinkers as weakening the social tissue and serving only particular interests in society. Similarly, democratic politics was deemed as inherently deficient in providing political authority, in service of private interests rather than the general good, and structurally incapable of dealing with conflicts of an irrational nature (S. Holmes 1993: 40).

In the postwar political context of radicalised antagonisms, deep disillusionment in liberalism and progress, and heightened revolutionary tensions the anti-liberal critiques gained new import. In this context, the anti-liberal currents of thought, that before the First World War had been of a mostly theoretical, intellectual nature, were further substantiated and adapted to political practice (Bracher 1984: 85). The liberal democratic society was portrayed as in a civilizational crisis, a crisis which totalitarian movements attempted to exploit. They strove for the mobilisation and organisation of

the prior unorganised and non-politicised masses, with which they shared a 'negative solidarity' against bourgeois society (see Arendt 1951). Liberalism was without doubt the prime target of fascist theorists

> such as Giovanni Gentile and Carl Schmitt, [who] violently assailed the liberal tradition. They excoriated liberalism for its atomistic individualism, its myth of the presocial individual, its scanting of the organic, its indifference to community, its denial that man belongs to a larger whole, its belief in the primacy of rights, its flight from "the political," its uncritical embrace of economic categories, its moral skepticism (or even nihilism), its decision to give abstract procedures and rules priority over substantive values and commitments, and its hypocritical reliance on the sham of judicial neutrality (S. Holmes 1993: xii).

Fascism promulgated a radical, alternative and new pattern of civilisation, against the background of liberal bourgeois society, a society deemed profoundly in crisis. Against the 'Gesellschaft' of liberalism, a reintegrated and socially united 'Gemeinschaft' was posed; against the formal freedom based on individual natural rights, collective emancipation in the nation; against the lack of decisive authority of the democratic state the authoritarian leader; against rational contemplation the force of direct, spontaneous action; and against one-sided materialism, spiritual. Fascist ideology thus offered new solutions to those aspects of liberal society that were deemed in crisis. Rather than promulgating an irrevocable return to the past, fascism offered a new and fuller form of freedom and a more authentic democracy organised by the all-powerful state (cf. A.J. Gregor, introduction to Gentile 2002). The dissolution of social bonds, by now accepted as inherent and inevitable in the creation of a modern, liberal society, was countered by the abolishment of intra-societal polarisation and the reunification of individuals in the nation. Below, I will deconstruct the alternative promulgated by fascism in terms of its general position on cultural inspiration; political foundations; and socio-political practices.

1. Cultural and political inspiration. The universalist categories introduced by fascism and national socialism, nation and race, were posed directly against the domination of liberal individualism, and formed the basic categories or units of humanity in their world views. In this sense, both fascism and national socialism promulgated conceptions of social life that had potential implications beyond the specific context in which they originated, as both race and nation form concepts sufficiently abstract to be prone to reinterpretation or to coincide with traditions of

thought elsewhere. Furthermore, universal validity was an explicit component of fascist programmes.[150] So, while the fascist and national socialist movements promulgated an 'extreme negation of the universalistic components of the cultural programme of modernity, especially the Enlightenment version' (Eisenstadt 1999: 112), they also professed a counter-vision, an alternative programme with its own universalistic pretensions of itself. Fascist ideology did not only provide a new theory of society, in which the prime, allegedly natural elements were continuous struggle and élitism in the internal sphere, and externally the struggle between nations, it also posited a vision of a counter-civilisation, a 'fascist century', or a 'new civilisation'. Fascism professed a new kind of society and a new type of man, and promised that the 'century of the individual' would be replaced by the 'century of the collective and the state' (Sternhell 1976: 337).

The collectivistic nature of fascism's primary concepts – nation and race – constituted an alternative to the previously predominant individualism, which was deemed to undermine the traditional community through its unnatural egalitarianism and diversifying pluralism. In combination with a vision of social life and the world as such as being constituted of the struggle of all against all (the radical opposite of the belief in harmony present in liberalism), and a doctrine based on radical and revolutionary voluntarism, these categories could provide for or strengthen collectivistic conceptions of the reconstruction of society. At the same time, these concepts could induce or re-inforce forms of particularism, as both nation and race could be given particularistic substance in local contexts.[151] Thus the idea of 'authentic' culture as opposed to 'materialist' civilisation could find widespread approval, but at the same time induced exclusivist forms of particularism, in which the essential and traditional features of a specific society were placed above everything else.

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[150] As Sternhell mentions, Fascist leaders argued that the 'basic doctrinal postulates of fascist regimes' had a universal character and were thus essentially valid for humanity as a whole (Sternhell 1976: 318).

[151] Although in the case of the racial ideology of the national socialists this seemed excluded by the idea of exclusivity and superiority of the Aryan race, the representation of the Jew as the eternal enemy and the embodiment of all malign elements of Western modernity could and were easily adopted or reinforced in other fascist programs.

2. Political foundations. Anti-liberal and fascist thought departed from the negation of the key postulate of liberalism, i.e., the rational individual as the basis of political and social life. The liberal conception of freedom as the rationally acting individual unrestricted by religious or political oppression and free to develop its individual qualities, was confronted with a collectivist conception of freedom, in which the individual was always already a social being. The revolt against liberal individualism therefore promulgated the emancipation of the collectivity as a path to individual freedom.[152] The emphasis on the community or collectivity led to the relativisation of the individual (Bracher 1984: 83). Society as such was perceived not as a mechanistic aggregate of independent, rationally calculating individuals, but as an organic collective of socially behaving human beings (Gregor 2000: 166-7). Fascist views of society 'accorded moral privilege to the collectivity, its traditions, and in particular its juridical embodiment in the state' (Sternhell 1976: 345).[153] One could therefore say that in the fascist and national socialist ideologies the collective was reified, in that it existed distinctly from the individuals or citizens, and constituted an entity in its own right and with its own will. The singularity of this collectivity reflected a total social unity, what Lefort calls the People-as-One (Lefort 1986).

Coinciding with the collectivist interpretation of freedom inherent in the fascist programme was a positive understanding of freedom. Freedom was equated with the membership of the individual in a collectivity or community. According to this vision, human freedom could not exist outside of society, as it was the rules, customs, traditions and history of society itself that allowed the individual to be free.[154] Only through self-

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[152] Dumont can therefore remark that 'the rights of man thus amount to the rights of the superior race' (Dumont 1986: 167).

[153] For Giovanni Gentile, one of the most important thinkers behind Italian fascism, 'a serious liberty with important content could not [be] obtain[ed] other than within the sound organism of the state, whose sovereignty would be the indestructible foundation of all its activities' (Gentile 2002: 7).

[154] Thus Mussolini remarked: 'In the fascist conception of history, man is only man by virtue of the spiritual process to which he contributes as a member of the family, the social group, the nation, and in function of history to which all nations bring their contributions. Hence, the great value of tradition in records, in language, in customs, in the rules of social life. Outside history, man is a

denial, a sense of duty, discipline and sacrifice in the name of the community, and thus the dissolution of the individual in the community could man be free. This was one of the principle aspects of the new man that was to be generated by the fascist revolutions (cf. Mosse 1999: 34). The fascist understanding of the new man posed a reconciliation of spirit and nature, which had been divided in Enlightenment thought (cf. Payne 1980: 11). The highly participatory character and mass mobilisation of fascist regimes were the political expression of this.

3. Socio-political practices. Anti-individualism coincided with the general reproach of formal-legal pluralism and 'negotiationism' inherent in liberal party politics and democratic systems. The procedural nature of democratic politics could not lead to its desired end, a prospering community, as it impeded social unity and promoted division and egoism. It was 'the ethic of ultimate ends rather than the ethic of responsibility' that was espoused as fascists did not consider politics as a matter of 'give-and-take of interest groups and parliamentary conflict', engaging 'in the difficult and frustrating business of balancing means and ends', but as a means 'to save their souls, find a new identity, or establish the authenticity of their commitment, or to re-establish a lost *Gemeinschaft*' (Herf 1984: 14, 27). Democracy was immanently incapable of representing the whole community or people. Liberal politics were exposed by both left and right as merely a facade for particular interests (see Furet 1999: 170).[155]

Fascism espoused a clear hierarchy of values to be established by and in an authoritative state. In this, fascism reproached the complete absence of values on the political level in pluralist liberalism, which ultimately relegated specific visions of a common good to the private sphere. Authoritarian and totalitarian thinking could counter such an absence by their clear adherence to absolute values, i.e. the promotion of race or class, embodied in a hierarchical, top-down organisation (Bracher 1984: 98-9). The more radical reactions against liberal modernity 'placed blood, race and soul

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non-entity. Fascism is therefore opposed to all individualistic abstractions based on eighteenth century materialism' (cited in: Sternhell 1976: 345).

[155] As Hannah Arendt remarks: '... the liberals' political philosophy, according to which the mere sum of individual interests adds up to the miracle of the common good, appeared to be only a rationalization of the recklessness with which private interests were pressed regardless of the common good' (Arendt 1951: 336).

beyond rational justification' (Herf 1984: 13). The absolute values could be found in the 'mechanic solidarity' of the *Gemeinschaft*, which was preferred over the 'organic' one of the *Gesellschaft* (cf. Löwy 1981). In other words, new society should be grounded in 'inspired' culture instead of 'soulless' civilisation (the latter term was interpreted as inextricably bound up with liberal and 'progressive' understandings of society[156]).

The construction of the new order was thus explicitly grounded in substantive values. The main object as well as agent of the desired transformation was the state, perceived as the *stato totalitario* or *totale Staat.* This total state was the fullest embodiment – historical-empirically speaking - of what I have called a 'substantive-ideological state'. On the one hand, the total state was the embodiment of the unity of the nation and as such had to consist of a single body itself; the party system of democracy represented different interests and institutionalised conflict, whereas the totalitarian state directly represented the people and its singular 'general will'. In the latter sense, the totalitarian state claimed to incorporate a form of popular sovereignty, superior to the mediated, differentiated and incomplete popular sovereignty of democracies (cf. Mosse 1999: 2). The leadership principle and singular party demonstrated the same logic, as both were deemed as the direct representation of the people.

On the other hand, the state was the active protector of the unity of the people and its 'Selbsterhaltung', and as such authorised to intervene in any conceivable societal sphere. Mussolini contended that outside the state 'no human or spiritual values can exist, much less have value' (in: Sternhell 1976: 356). In the totalitarian project, the differentiation between state and society as well as within society was - at least theoretically - completely dissolved in order 'to restore the mysterious irrational wholeness of man' (Arendt 1951: 336). The leader could be seen as both the embodiment of unity but also as a necessary function in the hierarchical organisational model of totalitarianism (Arendt 1951: 383, 387; cf. Lefort 1986: 288). The leadership function was not only dissolved in the larger community but also stood above it, in the sense that it was the leader who decided and organised and who mobilised the masses. The one could not do

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[156] Instead of taking the classical modernist meaning of civilisation as a culturally superior and advanced state of society, critiques often turned around the argument and emphasised not so much the progress that civilisation entailed but the down-sides of processes such as industrialisation and democratisation (Wagner 1990: 234).

without the other. The total state, i.e. 'a power that drew from itself the principle of law and the principle of knowledge' and in which distinctions between societal dimensions disappeared and the political thus presided over everything (Lefort 1986: 280, 286) needed an individual that embodied the will of the people and from whom all directions and decisions ultimately derived.

The conceived form of citizenship or membership in fascist societies was a highly exclusivist one, based on narrowly ethnic, cultural-linguistic, and in the most extreme cases, racial terms. In particular in the latter case, membership of society was predefined by birth, and the exclusivity and the purity of the people could be defended by recourse to pseudo-scientific, biological means. The nature of membership in the fascist community stood in contrast to the liberal conception of natural rights and negative freedom as it was primarily based on a strong sense of national solidarity and survival, which excluded individuals outside of their 'own' community.

Modes of legitimation

The collectivity formed the essence of fascist thought. In fierce critique of the liberal conception of the individual preceding the community and the artificiality of the *Gesellschaft* or civilisation that replaced the *Gemeinschaft*, fascist thinkers placed a re-invented but authentic community - based on race, religion or ethnicity - at the forefront. The fascist order was therefore primarily legitimated through a form of goal-rational legitimation, i.e. by turning the community, its defence and prosperity into the absolute value around which all other thoughts and actions revolved. In this way, fascism proposed to retrieve the alienated individual and his lost original communal relations. By placing the community and its natural unity prior to or outside of actual history, fascism could claim its authenticity, its justification beyond rationalism, and could reveal the detrimental effects of artificial liberalism and capitalism for the authentic and still undivided community (cf. Herf 1984; Marcuse 1988: 6-8).

By returning to this putative authenticity of the past and by claiming to re-establish the age-old, undivided community, fascist thinking partially evoked traditional legitimation. This did not entail by any means that fascism could be considered merely a reactionary, traditionalist movement. It proposed a novel approach to popular sovereignty and the representation of human will and autonomy but in a unified,

solidary society. In this way fascism could claim to have resolved the enduring tension in modernity between the individual and society.

A form of charismatic legitimation was evidently part of the fascist project, both in the role of the leader (most visible in Hitlerism) and in the total state. The charisma of the leader was a function of his ability to mobilise the masses and of his direct identification with the salvation of the nation and allegedly supreme knowledge of its needs. The charisma of the state emerged as a result of its reified form, i.e., as an autonomous entity which through its embodiment of the people and through acting as its last resort gained mystical connotations (the charismatic character of the state seems more a characteristic of Italian fascism, in which the state was glorified and attributed an autonomous and absolute role, than of national socialism in which the state was subordinate to race and *Volk*, Sternhell 1976: 356).[157]

8.2 A cultural, spiritual alternative to Romanian Liberalism: Fascism

Whereas in other countries the widespread nature of anti-liberal critique stemmed from resentment of defeat (Germany) or inertia (Italy) - which caused the transformation and radicalisation of old nationalism into a violent and fanatic extremism - in Romania the driving force was, paradoxically, territorial expansion[158] (Manea 1995: 104). Ultimately, fascism seemed to provide an answer to Greater Romania's weak national identity, in a similar manner to national-socialism in interwar Germany: 'In a period of economic, political, moral and intellectual crisis, it provided a simple solution, violent, "radical"' (Manea 1995: 100).

The Liberal nationalist project met with critique and resistance from the 1860s onwards, as seen in chapter 7. Nevertheless, the indigenist critiques that could be found in strands of thought as diverse as peasantism/populism, nationalism, and 'progressive

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[157] Giovanni Gentile made a distinction between nationalism, in which 'the State is conceived as prior to the individual', and fascism, in which 'the State and the individual are one' (Gentile 2002: 25).

[158] In other East European countries, such as Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, similar anti-liberal discontent emerged, despite their 'winner' status in the First World War (Chirot 1989: 389-91).

conservatism' never posed a systemic alternative to the project of Liberal nationalism. A counter-project with systemic ambitions only emerged in the 1920s and 1930s, and was sustained by the Iron Guard and the intellectual movement centred around Nae Ionescu (see chapter 5). Although virtually all political movements referred to nationhood and the 'national essence' in the interwar period (see Verdery 1995), the Fascist movement represented the most radical interpretation (together with the communists who, rather than having a radical understanding of nationality, proposed to abolish Romania's nationhood altogether in the name of the international class struggle). The radicalisation professed by the Fascists entailed a rigorous transformation of the understanding of nationhood. The Fascists criticised the universalism of the French Revolution; in line with the political romanticist critiques of Enlightenment rationalism they embraced a theory of national specificity. Whereas the Liberals promulgated an essentially 'objective', institutionalist definition of nationhood, referring to the 'objective' criteria of history, language and culture, the radical intelligentsia as well as the Fascist movement at large employed a definition of nationhood in which 'subjective' criteria prevailed. The Fascists understood the 'national specificity' as a particular state of mind, a particular Romanian essence revealed in a spiritual outlook. They defined therefore the essence of Romanian identity not merely in terms of control of the national economy and the polity, but also in terms of the collective embodiment of specific cultural characteristics, narrowing the concept of 'authentic' Romanians and thus aiming criticism inwards.

The spiritualist and Fascist counter-movement that embodied the domestic critique of the Liberal project developed largely as a native movement, without relying explicitly on external sources of reference.[159] Nevertheless, the external environment played a significant role in the critique in two ways. First of all, the emerging and increasingly successful fascist and national-socialist movements provided reference points for the

[159] I refer here to the Fascist student movement of Codreanu. The cultural criticism of the intellectual movement (which only became explicitly fascist in the 1930s) was more versatile and constituted a synthesis between nineteenth century 'organic' nationalism (Eminescu and Iorga), and interwar neo-romantic cultural pessimism (as espoused by, for instance, Oswald Spengler, Ernst Jünger, and Martin Heidegger in Germany, Charles Maurras in France, and Nae Ionescu). As Voicu argues, Nae Ionescu's thought was based on the Junimists (Maiorescu and Eminescu), peasantism, and German ideas. Nae Ionescu studied in Germany in the period 1916-1919 (Ricketts 1988; Voicu 1998a: 2).

burgeoning Romanian movement, especially visible after the victory of Hitler in 1933, the latter having a discernible impact on the morale of the native movement. Secondly, the intellectual movement was a versatile one in which foreign currents of thought had been a significant ingredient in the debates all along, and which started to move towards a more narrow and outspokenly particularist vision only after 1933 (see Antonesei 1985; Petreu 2003a, 2003b; Ricketts 1988).

The *sui generis* elements of Romanian Fascism lay in its unusual emphasis on religion in the form of Eastern Orthodoxy (Pavel 1998*a*: 222) and, to a lesser extent, in the mythicisation of the peasantry and the rural community. The crucial role played by religion in the Romanian Fascist discourse - discernable in its essentialised function in the overall discourse - and radical particularism with its excessive emphasis on the preservation of native traditions did not, however, prevent fascism from being an essentially modern project.[160] In spite of the Fascist claim of wanting to reconcile the Romanian nation with God, and therefore to explicitly reintroduce religion into the political sphere, the by far most important aim was to reconstruct society and man through political action and on the basis of a political programme.[161] The overall Fascist programme (understood here as comprising both the articulations of the Fascist movement as such and those of the intellectual movement) contained a strong notion of revolution or regeneration, of the overthrow of the old order and of the creation of a new society. The old order was criticised for its unnatural and artificial nature, whereas a new society based on 'pure', Romanian essentials was envisaged as the foundation of an 'authentic' emancipation of the Romanians. The notion of revolution in the Fascist project contained both pre-modern and modern connotations of the term. On the one hand, revolution meant the construction of a fundamentally new order, whereas on the other, revolution should lead to the restoration of an earlier existing situation, which had been undermined by the Liberal modern project. A collateral element was the moral regeneration of man, revealing a focus in the Fascist project on the individual and a profound belief in the perfectibility of man, both essentially modern conceptions. In a

[160] By starting from this assumption, I differ from analyses that understand fascism to be an anti-modern movement (see e.g. Davidescu 2002; Ioanid 1990; Ornea 1995).

[161] Eisenstadt's analysis of the modern aspects of fundamentalist movements has provided me with useful reference points (see Eisenstadt 1999).

similar vein, the emancipation of the collective or nation formed a crucial element in the Fascist project for the reconstruction of society, revealing some form of reference to the notion of popular sovereignty.

At the same time, the Romanian Fascist movement forcefully promulgated anti-Enlightenment ideas in the form of anti-rational, anti-individualist, and anti-democratic conceptions, and against the differentiation and disruption of traditional society promoted the upholding of (re-invented) traditional values and forms of belonging (as expressed in Eastern Orthodox religion and rural, village-based community values).

Crisis narrative of the Fascist project

The coalescence of the interwar tensions made critique on the Liberal project both widespread and effective. The traditional (peasantist, nationalist) and radical critiques focused on unresolved political problems stemming from the pre-war period, i.e. the national and social questions, problems which had become more acute and more complex as a result of the interwar transformation of Romania. In the early twenties, the gist of the peasantist and nationalist critiques of Liberalism were social integration (extending political membership to the rural population) and social equality (a more equal distribution of national wealth through land reforms). After the extension of male suffrage and far-reaching land reforms, the national question emerged as the dominant one. As Livezeanu argues: '... by partially satisfying the peasant demand for land, the land reform made it possible for the national question to displace the social question – that of the peasantry and its land hunger – as the chief issue in Romanian society' (1995: 12).

The common denominator in the critiques raised by the Fascists was the demand for the primacy of the spiritual and the cultural. In this sense, one could speak of a culturalist critique of the existing societal order. Despite the acknowledgement of the crucial political role of the Liberal revolutionaries in constructing a Romanian nation-state, 1848 was often portrayed as the moment of rupture with the past and discontinuity with authentic national traditions (Ornea 1995: 30; Voicu 1998a). From this realisation - that of a fundamental breaking point in history in which natural, organic history was interrupted by the introduction of foreign elements - stemmed a whole range of critiques. The call for the primacy of the spiritual was raised against the primacy of the

economic and the political found in the materialist and rationalist ideas introduced by the Liberals in the nineteenth century. In addition, the a-historical, general and abstract nature of Western structures and ideas (articulated in their juridical nature and universal validity) signified that these could never represent the particular, the essence of the Romanian nation.[162] The Western forms 'imposed' by the Liberals represented a foreign element with no organic roots in Romanian reality. The liberal state was thus structurally incapable of representing the authentic traditions of Romanian life (Ornea 1995: 32-3). The remedy to this inauthenticity was local spiritual creation. Only through local creativity based on local traditions could the Romanian be authentic.

The imported structure most reproached by the Fascists was democracy. As Eliade has put it: 'If a good idea ever had a deadly result for a nation, then, in the case of Romania, that good idea was democracy' (Eliade, cited in: Ricketts 1988: 900). A political critique 'unmasked' the democratic system, exposing democracy as serving the interests of the small bourgeois, capitalist class instead of the common good. On the level of values and morality, various other arguments were posited (the following list is not exhaustive). First of all, the system of democracy was seen as a political system, which could not represent the national collectivity and its will. As Codreanu observed, instead of unifying the nation the democratic system led to its fragmentation into mutually opposing political forces, thus weakening it (Codreanu 1973: 328). Furthermore, the natural rights embodied in the democratic system referred only to the abstract individual. Democracy took neither the actually existing national community nor the spiritual or 'transhistorical' nation, which included ancestors and future generations, into account (Codreanu 1973: 336). Secondly, democracy was reproached for being a purely intellectual construct, with no roots in reality. Democracy, based on the 'inventions' of natural rights (equality[163]) and the social contract, were said to lead

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[162] As Hirschman has pointed out, the argument that the 'deep structures' of society ultimately remain untouched by 'cosmetic' changes has been often used in reaction to major changes and reforms in Western Europe, and 'is one of the principal weapons in the reactionary arsenal' (1991: 79). In the Romanian context, this discursive 'weapon' could however also be utilised for the formulation of alternative projects of modernisation.

[163] Ionescu considered the notion of equality one of the worst elements of democracy as it went against the natural human order, i.e., the fact that human beings are in reality inequal. This observation led him to promulgate a strong form of political élitism (Voicu 1998a).

away from organic social harmony (Codreanu 1973: 328-30; Voicu 1998a). This critique has affinities with the notion of 'forms without substance' in that democracy was perceived as merely a juridical form unrepresentative of any local Romanian substance, i.e. the Romanian rural traditions and Orthodox religion. A third argument concerned the anachronistic and obsolete nature of democracy as a political system of rule. This argument was sustained in both a historical and a theoretical mode. Historically, democracy was seen as giving way to other political forms, both of the left and right, all over Europe. In the Romanian context, an anti-democratic discourse could easily be related to political realities as the imperfections and dysfunctional nature of Romanian democracy were clear to all (Voicu 1998a). Alongside the historically founded argument of obsolescence, theoretical arguments were made on the imminent collapse of the democratic system. Ionescu maintained that political parties are naturally inclined to oppose each other and therefore ultimately inclined to defeat their adversary. In the last instance, therefore, this meant that an absolute victory of one political party would lead to the elimination of the party system as such (Ionescu 1937: 178-9). Finally, the democratic system was attributed a structural incompetence to govern, as it opened political rule to non-specialists (Ionescu in: Voicu 1998a), whereas democratic parties lacked continuity, and democracy was deemed incapable of the necessary authority (Codreanu 1973: 329).

Interpretations and legitimations of the Fascist counterproject

Romanian Fascism, despite being a primarily native movement, comprised most of the elements I have identified as part of the fascist paradigm: the primacy of the collectivity over the individual, the radical negation of democracy, rationalism, and liberalism, a preoccupation with the preservation of traditional values, and the call for a spiritual revolution. The distinct elements of Romanian Fascism were (as mentioned earlier) the central place of religion in its self-identification, a relatively minor attention to political institutions, a non-developmentalist attitude, and a radical particularism and almost exclusive attention to Romanian regeneration. Below, I will outline the Romanian Fascist discourse by means of three categories: cultural inspiration; political foundations; and socio-political practices.

1. Cultural inspiration. If national Liberalism was typified as a synthesis of liberalism and political romanticism, in which values, ideas and orientations were defined by both a particularist and universalist relation to the world (what I have labelled particularist universalism), the entire project of Fascism was designed to redefine Romanian culture and the socio-political order on the singular basis of indigenous, traditional values. Thus it incorporated and continued the romantic nationalist trend of both Liberal-nationalism and its 'traditionalist' critiques (for a commentary of the latter, see chapter 7), while strongly rejecting its universalist component. In the Fascist project, however, the romanticist notions of cultural essence and national individuality were radicalised not only by their promotion to the top of the hierarchy of values, but also by the fact that the notions themselves were essentialised in a limited number of indigenous values which totalised the overall discourse. The Fascist view of Romanian society could be labelled radicalist particularism, as it parted exclusively from local, indigenous traditions and rejected anything exogenous as artificial.[164] The essential values posited by Fascism, often defined as Eastern Orthodox religion and ruralism, constituted the only legitimate basis on which Romanian culture or the national essence could be founded. In this way not only foreign, universalist ideas and values were rejected, but also other, local definitions of Romanian nationhood.[165] Whereas the Liberal-nationalist project had been based on 'mimetic competition', the alternative project endorsed in the interwar years replaced the contemporary understanding of nationhood with one of 'quasi-mystical self-imitation' (Antohi 2000: xvi, introduction to Liiceanu; cf. Irimia-Tüchtenhagen 1997: 321, fn 8). In other words, a different way of realising the unrealised dream of Liberal-nationalism was 'to drop out of "competition" with the West and choose the alternative of a Balkan, patriarchal model in the autochthonous tradition' (Volovici 1991: 81).

The universal nature of liberalism was strongly rejected by the Fascists, in particular in its manifestations of rationalism and individualism. These tenets of Western

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[164] As remarked by Codreanu: 'This culture can therefore never be international, because it expresses the genius of the nation, its blood. The culture becomes international in as far it is an emanation of the nation, but it remains always national in its origins' (Codreanu 1973: 339).

[165] See Verdery (1995) for an analysis of the different understandings of the 'national essence' in the interwar period.

universalism were not only rejected in their political manifestations of democracy and contractual relations, but also on a philosophical level. The domination of reason in Western culture, the assumed self-sufficiency of reason, and its supposed autonomy (the idea that the individual by means of reason could master the world) were regarded as the antithesis of Romanian culture (Hitchins 1995: 148). The 'naked' individualism of the West was incompatible with the Romanian understanding of man as an ultimately social being. Ionescu counterposed God-oriented Eastern metaphysics, related to Eastern Orthodoxy in which the individual was dissolved into the collective, to the ego-centric, individualistic Western metaphysics. According to Ionescu, meaning in history could not be found through reason, but only through 'lived-experience' (*trăire*), thereby proposing a fundamentally different manner of relating to the world (Ricketts 1988: 104-5). The essence and particularity of Romanians was to be found in their belonging to a higher, collective sphere constituted by the traditions of Orthodoxy, a mysticist way of relating to the world, and ruralism.[166] Indeed, the Legionary movement promoted a 'new man' who was to be the opposite of the 'bourgeois man'. His behaviour was not to be based on cold calculation, material interests, and socially detached individualism, but on moral purity, sacrifice, discipline, and subjugation to the collective interest (Ricketts 1988: 656). Western individualism was rejected in favour of this indigenous tendency towards collectivism, the desire to be part of the whole.

2. Political foundations. Fascism was continuous with liberalism in that its overarching objective was the liberation of the Romanian nation. However, where in liberalism national freedom and self-determination had been conceived mainly in terms of negative or formal collective liberty, i.e., the creation of a politically controlled national 'private sphere' within which national continuity would be ensured, the Fascists radically redefined the notion of liberty. According to fascist thinkers, political unity

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[166] Nae Ionescu saw strong correlations between Western religious, political and socio-economic culture, which as a whole was incompatible with the Romanian one - with its emphasis on Orthodoxy, contemplation, and the spiritual: 'Everything in this world is linked together and forms a system. And politics cannot deviate from this rule. Thus... the constitutional parliamentary regime is a correlate of the Protestant mentality, of the individualistic-democratic, rationalistic and scientific mind-set, and of the capitalist-bourgeois economic formula erected on a preponderately commercial and industrial base' (Ionescu, cited in: Ricketts 1988: 102-3).

could only be meaningful if it would lead to the preservation and expression of particular Romanian values. The Fascists portrayed the Liberal project as one that introduced entirely new and foreign forms into Romanian reality, thereby constituting a complete break with the past (cf. Ornea 1995: 29-33). It was for this reason that the Liberal project was structurally incapable of representing Romanian reality and the Romanian 'essence'.[167] The Liberal Romanian state was reproached for only representing 'empty', 'hollow' concepts and forms, a critique that had been raised earlier by the Junimists in their notion of 'forms without substance'. In this, fascism entailed the reintroduction of substantive values into the political sphere. According to fascist conceptions man or the individual was an exclusively social being, and thus Romanian man could only realise himself within the collective sphere. The collectivity or national community itself could not be based on universal, imported, and imitated values, as these could never represent the Romanian essence.

Emancipation of the nation by means of the re-assertion of authentic national values and their shifting into the centre of the political project of modernisation formed the main task of the Fascist counter-project. In particular, the intellectual movement represented by Eliade, Cioran, and Noica, amongst others, underlined the need for spiritual, cultural creativity in order to express and produce a real, authentic Romanian cultural being (this intellectual project was initially only expressed in a-political terms, but gained an increasingly political dimension in the 1930s). The intellectuals pleaded for the re-evaluation and primacy of the spiritual in the hierarchy of general human values (Antonesei 1985: 204). The fascist intellectuals echoed the romanticist emphasis on creativity as a means to the salvation and emancipation of the human being. Only within a culture that was locally produced and therefore authentic could the Romanian individual be truly Romanian, realise its essence and become a complete, integral human being.[168] It was, naturally, the young generation of intellectuals itself that was

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[167] According to Vasile Marin, member of the Iron Guard, the Liberal project had never led to the creation of a national Romanian state as it represented only a juridical expression in the international order, without having resulted in the integration of the Romanian nation and without representing Romanian culture (in: Ornea 1995: 29).

[168] Cf. Antonesei 1985: 202. Mircea Eliade identified two paths towards salvation and emancipation: the first, a religious path, led to emancipation by unifying oneself with God (which

deemed to be especially 'fit' to create this national culture. Within the political movement of Fascism the emphasis was less on cultural creation as on realising the preconditions for an authentic and unitary Romanian state ('a great spiritual revolution of the entire people', Codreanu 1974: 67) by removing foreign elements. In other words, the political implications of the idea of an authentic Romanian state were found in the purification of Romanian society, through the expulsion or elimination of the stereotypical Other, the Jew.[169]

3. Socio-political order. The main object of the Fascist project was the national collective.[170] In this sense, one could say that Fascism formed a continuity with the Liberal-nationalist project. However, whereas in the Liberal project the creation and preservation of the sovereignty of the national and territorial state had been a major preoccupation, the main focus of the Fascist project was on the moral and spiritual generation of the Romanian state. The Fascists sought a spiritual and cultural revolution that the Liberals had failed to carry out, the realisation of which was conceived as the only way in which the Romanian nation could be truly liberated and meaningful. In concomitance with the objective of national regeneration, both the Fascist political movement and the intellectual generation strongly rejected democracy as a political system and promoted a totalitarian state. The state was conceptualised as organic, the embodiment of the national soul rather than a rational structure based on the protection of individual rights. The state was not so much a political instrument as a cultural one, as Eliade and Ionescu believed (Ricketts 1988: 897; see also Codreanu 1973). The totalitarian or fascist state represented the higher collective interest and was a vehicle to

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he called 'soteria'), the other, a secular path, by immersion into the history of the nation ('sympathia') (Ricketts 1988: 889).

[169] According to Codreanu a new Romania implied giving to 'the nation its real meaning of a natural society of individuals of the same race, and not the abstract meaning of the juridical nationality of the citizen' (Codreanu 1974: 101). Both the Jew and the 'politicianist' were reproached for their role in having 'deformed, having disfigured the structure of the Daco-Roman race' (Codreanu 1973: 244).

[170] Both the intellectual generation and the Legionary movement displayed an elementary preoccupation with the grandeur of the nation. Codreanu's main concern was to create a powerful, homogeneous, and undivided nation (Codreanu 1974), whereas the intellectual generation was preoccupied with inserting Romanian culture into world culture (see Petrea 2003*a*).

further Romanian culture, ultimately based on Romanian ethnicity and the Christian Orthodox religion. In this, the neo-nationalist, Fascist perception went beyond the xenophobic element that pre-war nationalism and conservatism had contained, giving anti-semitism a primary place in its ideology (Ioanid 1990: 29). Nae Ionescu, Nichifor Crainic, a theologian and fascist theoretician, and others formulated the concept of a 'corporate ethnocratic state', 'a state with a peasant character' in which Jews were excluded from political participation (Volovici 1991: 118, 129).[171] The electoral system was essentially flawed; it could never represent the national will as the masses were not capable of identifying their own will (Codreanu 1973: 330-2; cf., for Ionescu, Voicu 1998a).

The totalitarian vision of the state was complemented by the cult of the 'căpitan', i.e. the Iron Guard leader Codreanu, who was to be accompanied by an 'ascetic élite' (Ionescu) or a 'new aristocracy' (Eliade). The movement would function as a role model for the population, turning Romanians into 'new men'. By their ascetic and submissive behaviour the élite would avoid the particularism of the Liberal political class (see Ioanid 1990: 136). Codreanu and Nae Ionescu therefore pointed to the necessity of an 'exceptional personality' or a 'new aristocracy' who would have an intimate knowledge of the 'eternal laws' which the masses did not have. Here we find a strong element of messianism. The leaders had access to privileged knowledge, for them 'the nation is something concrete' (Ionescu in: Voicu 1998a), and therefore they were capable of its guidance. The new political form or totalitarian state that results from this would not be a dictatorial rule, as a dictatorship implied the subjugation of the masses to the will of one man, but would constitute a complete, total agreement between the masses and the leader(-s) so as to encompass one single will (Codreanu 1973: 266-7). The élite was considered the 'emanation of the people, [they are] as the nation. Their decision is presented to be the decision of the entire people. That is why one says totalitarian, because the individual is completely melted into the collectivity' (Ionescu: in Voicu

[171] The Jew was identified as the main obstacle on the road to national regeneration: 'The Jew was unacceptable not only because he was a "foreigner" with a different religion; he was identified with all the "vices": political (democracy, liberalism), social (corruption, social inequality, poverty), moral and cultural (cosmopolitism, poisonous foreign influences) and spiritual (rationalism, individualism, Marxism)' (Volovici 1991: 139).

1998b). The political form promulgated by the Fascists was highly distinct from the democratic system as the Fascists rejected the implications of a formal-legal system, i.e., the differentiation between state and society, the creation of an autonomous societal sphere, and the relegation of substantive values to the private sphere. The totalitarian system can from this perspective be seen as an attempt to resolve the continuous tension between the ruler and the ruled (representation) in any political system.

Furthermore, it was held that only in this way could the essential, particular values of the Romanian nation find political expression. Membership of the polity was therefore exclusively for those that belonged to the 'transhistorical nation', i.e., by birth and thus defined in ethnic terms. Ethnicity, in the programme of Codreanu even understood as raciality, defined as the Daco-Roman race. Those from Daco-Roman descent were threatened by the Jews as well as by the 'politicianist' (the Romanian politicians), a 'sub-human type', who 'does not possess anything of the nobility of our race anymore, who dishonours our race, who defiles it, kills it' (Codreanu 1973: 244). Despite reference to the term race, the Romanian Fascist ideology seems to lack an elaborated pseudo-scientific theory of racism, as found in national socialism.

Modes of legitimation

The radical particularist project rested upon various modes of legitimation. The derived mode of legitimation in the Liberal project - which was in the final instance a legitimation based on the experiences of other societies - was rejected in favour of a legitimation based on Romanian national traditions, or 'quasi-mystical self-imitation'. As Romanian society was in substance different from the Western ones, it was incompatible with Western forms. Fascism invoked historical continuity as it claimed to restore traditional Romanian society. Traditional legitimation was based on an autochthonist rereading of history, i.e. instead of finding the ethnogenesis of the Romanian people in both Roman and Dacian origins, Romanian roots were found exclusively in the people of Dacia, a native people, thereby excluding linkages with Western Europe. The enduring cultural inferiority complex towards the advanced West felt by many Romanians, despite the generous territorial provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, was convincingly dealt with by the call for a 'national regeneration'. Intense

consciousness of the country's backwardness[172] could only be countered through a radical move, i.e., radical particularism. Such an alternative route to modernisation could hardly be imagined without a strong, charismatic leader capable of mobilising the Romanian people around the absolute goal of national regeneration, as a counterpart to Western pluralism and democracy. National regeneration was to be based on orthodox religion and an 'orthodox ethnic state', elements that provided for a unique Romanian experience.[173] Here one can identify various modes of legitimation that run directly counter to the legitimacy of the Liberal project. The principal mode of legitimation of the Fascist project was charismatic: charismatic legitimation was to replace the Western legal-rational legitimacy as the figure of the leader became the ultimate expression of a strong state, the 'eternal' national spirit and community (see Codreanu 1973: 268). Furthermore, as the individualism and the rational-procedural spirit of the Western model were detested, its overall legitimacy was denied (one can speak here of negative legitimation). Western rationalism and pluralism and their ruinous consequences for national unity were to be countered by the absolute goals of national community and social harmony, supreme values that required faith rather than rational calculation.[174]

8.3 The strategic-institutional programme of Romanian Fascism

The main politico-institutional elements of the Fascist discourse can be reconstructed on the basis of fascist perceptions of societal progress, collective self-rule, political representation and control (see chapter 3). One should bear in mind that two factors worked against a fully cognitive, institutional crystallisation of the Fascist discourse. First of all, the Fascist programme was primarily concerned with preventing the corrosion of traditional and essential values and their return to the political centre, and therefore promulgated its revolution mainly on a spiritual, ethical level. Secondly, the

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[172] Emil Cioran, member of the New Generation, expressed this backwardness as the 'vanity of a man born within a small culture is forever wounded' (Cioran, mentioned in Tismăneanu 1996: 390).

[173] As Totok remarks: '[o]nly through the creation of unique cultural values would a small people be able to assert itself, to succeed in the world, and to find recognition' (Totok 1995: 925).

[174] A famous part of Codreanu's 'program' was its four rules of conduct: faith in god, faith in the mission, reciprocal love, and group chanting (Codreanu 1973: 240-1).

institutional moment of the Fascist project was very short: effectively four and a half months (September 1940-January 1941, see Pavel 1998*a*; Petreu 2003a), and therefore the translation of the discourse into a political doctrine of governance did not take place.

1. Societal progress. Fascism broke decisively with the positive reading of Western modernity by the Romanian Liberals. Whereas the latter promoted a project of modernisation that was firmly grounded in materialist and progressivist notions, the former emphasised the artificial and foreign nature of capitalist and democratic society, and the erosion of essential Romanian values that its introduction had brought with it. The Fascists' fundamentally different conception of society revealed itself in the continuous emphasis on a 'moral' and 'ethical' regeneration of Romanian society. This regeneration was linked to the idea of the purification of Romanian society from exogenous and internal, in particular Jewish, elements, and therefore the reclamation of Romania for the ethnic Romanians. In this respect, the Fascist project was similar to the Liberal one. Nevertheless, the Fascist conception of Romanian society radically differed in other aspects, namely in giving primacy to spiritual and moral values over materialist ones. Here, the Fascist project broke with the materialist progressivism of both liberalism and communism, promulgating a radical, alternative vision of the reconstruction of society on the basis of substantive, traditional values. The primary objective was to instigate a moral revolution, which would transform the Romanians into new men. This new man embodied two components that had been lost in the Western materialist and individualist man (in Romania personified by the greedy 'politicianist' and the Jew): spiritualism and a 'thick' sense of social belonging. Codreanu criticised the dominant materialist mentality in the Western world and proposed the restitution of the primacy of the spirit over the material (Codreanu 1974: 238). In the Fascist programme, then, the social question was redefined or, perhaps more accurately, relegated to a lower status. The Fascists often disregarded developmental aspects and when they did take such considerations into account, they did so mostly by defending rural traditions (Gregor 2000: 176-7).[175] Capitalism, industrialism, concomitant urbanisation and economic liberalism were rejected for much the same reasons as a

[175] The non-materialist, ascetic attitude of the Romanian Fascists could be seen as rather distinct. In their early years, Hungarian Fascists had a similar non-developmental attitude, but turned to the promotion of industrialisation in the mid-1930s (Gregor 2000: 176).

democratic political system. They were foreign, artificial inventions that did not resonate in the 'authentic' Romanian rural life. Ionescu regarded the city as 'too abstract' and modern industry as 'too rational' (Hitchins 1994: 317). As mentioned earlier, Codreanu agitated against the domination of the material over the spiritual, which was threatening the 'original harmony of life' (Codreanu 1973: 237-8). Mircea Vulcănescu (a member of the young generation) saw Romania as divided into an urban and a rural society, the first serving the interests of foreigners, whereas the latter represented the unchanged, traditional, true Romanian character (Ioanid 1990: 149-50). In contrast to the tendency of capitalism to create differentiation and tensions between social classes, Fascist neo-nationalism aimed beyond class differences by promoting national unity and harmony.

2. Collective self-determination. The Fascist conception of self-rule stemmed directly from the collective level of the nation. In this, Fascism did not criticise the notion of national emancipation as such, but defied the liberal conception of a legal-formally based political understanding of sovereignty and redefined the concept of a negative space of freedom in cultural, spiritual terms. Whereas the Liberals had continuously sought to realise national independence by adopting internationally endorsed standards (a constitutional-democratic and industrialised nation-state), the Fascists deemed this conception a contradiction in terms. In their view, the Romanian nation could only be truly independent when its political structures reflected its inner nature, its 'national essence' (*specificul național*). Fascism therefore rejected the thesis of the universal validity of the Liberal project and promulgated an essentialist, radical particularist vision of Romanian modern society in which the Romanian nation would be completely - including culturally - detached from the West.[176]

In a similar vein, the Fascists regarded the political unification of all Romanians in a single nation-state as insufficient in terms of emancipation of the Romanian people and the realisation of collective autonomy. To fully realise national independence and collective autonomy, a deeper 'moral' or 'spiritual revolution' was necessary[177] (cf.

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[176] Nae Ionescu, for instance, argued for a complete witdrawal of Romania from Western civilisation, and thus 'to renounce the civilised superstructure' of Romanian society (Voicu 1998b).

[177] As Codreanu indicated: 'The state cannot be based merely on the theoretical conceptions of constitutional law. The new state presupposes, in the first place and as an indispensable element, a

Ornea 1995: 31). Only a society reconstructed on the basis of authentic Romanian values and traditions could lead to the full emancipation of the Romanian people. The unique and essential values of Romanian society were identified as Eastern Christian Orthodoxy and a religious mystique (Volovici 1991: 80), promulgated against the universal Western values of formal-legalism, democracy, and rationalism. Democracy, according to the Fascists, was a foreign import and merely a 'juridical expression of the international order', which represented a break with traditional, essential values and impeded the realisation of an authentic Romanian national state (Ornea 1995: 27-30). The institutional implications of such a view were that political and public life were to be purified from the influence of extraneous elements that undermined the Romanian nation from without, but also from within. This was most clearly expressed in the notions of 'numerus clausus' or even 'numerus nullus', not only within the confines of academic life, but also in the societal sphere as a whole.[178]

3. Political representation and control. The political and institutional implications of the radical particularist philosophy of Romanian society were expressed in an exclusivist and totalitarian vision of the state. The totalistic vision of the fascist political and cultural programme of modernity meant that: a. The state was to represent the ethnic nation only; b. The state was to represent the essential values of Romanian ethnicity; c. Political rule by a single party was to be substituted for *pluripartidism* (Codreanu 1973: 268); d. The organisation of the state and state-society relations should take the form of corporatist structures, which consisted of professional organisations rather than parliamentary institutions.

In order to institutionalise a state that embodied the Romanian essence and protected its distinctiveness against foreign influence, strong boundaries between ethnic Romanians and non-Romanians were essential. At the centre of the Fascist project for a 'new Romania' stood the idea of ethnic rule, to be realised in an 'ethnocratic' state. This political form was not conceived as a body ultimately legitimised by its representation

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new type of man. A new state with men having old shortcomings cannot be imagined' (Codreanu 1974: 67).

[178] Here, the Fascists' propositions for purification seemed essentially similar to the Liberal-nationalist attempts at wide-scale Romanianisation, apart from the ethical, moral groundings of these proposals.

of the people (as in liberalism), understood instead from a holist conception, i.e., as representing the nation as such. The nation, in this vision, did not entail an aggregation of individuals with similar cultural and ethnic linguistic characteristics, as the Liberal nationalists believed, but rather represented a transhistorical entity, including previous and future generations, the 'eternal nation' (Codreanu 1974: 59). A spiritual and transhistorical conception was explicitly counterposed to the 'limited' and abstract juridical conception of the nation contained in liberalism (Codreanu 1974: 101). The 'ethnocratic state' (Nichifor Crainic), 'totalitarian state' (Emil Cioran), or 'new state' (Corneliu Codreanu) was the political expression of the transhistorical nation of ethnic Romanians and was to substitute an 'organic' state, developed from and in touch with local realities, for the juridical, abstract, and imported form of state[179] (Ornea 1995: 33). The political mission of the new state was primary the purification of Romania from foreign elements, mostly understood as the Jews (Volovici 1991: 128). The emancipation of the Romanian people was only considered possible through such a move. This meant the abolition of the democratic political system, seen as an instrument of foreigners (again, especially the Jews), and the establishment of a regime that uniquely represented the Romanian nation (Ornea 1995: 29). In more practical terms, this meant the cancellation of political and property rights for Jews (Petreu 2003a).

The state should not only represent the ethnic nation but also its essential values, which made up the Romanian particularity or essence. The essential element of Romanian culture most frequently cited was that of Orthodox Christianity. The importance of religion in the definition of Romanian ethnicity was acknowledged by Nae Ionescu, the philosophy professor and the spiritual mentor of the young intellectual generation and later of the Iron Guard[180], by Nichifor Crainic, a theologian, poet and important theoretician and politician of fascism, who promoted an 'ethnocracy' based on Orthodox religion (cf. Verdery 1995: 123), and by the leader of the Iron Guard,

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[179] The Liberal democratic state could never represent the Romanian people and their culture as such, because it was based on a constitution that was based on a concept of citizenship that did not recognise ethnic, linguistic, or religious distinctions (Ornea 1995: 29). Here, the tension between universalism and particularism becomes visible.

[180] Ionescu defined the essence of being Romanian as being Orthodox (Ionescu 1937).

Codreanu, who sought to reunite the nation with God through the 'legionary' revolution and the construction of a 'new Romania'.

A totalitarian vision of the political order was further expressed in the abolition of the pluralist party system and the promulgation of the doctrine of the single ruling party. The party system was deemed incapable of representing the national interest as it only represented the particular interests of the corrupt and egoistic 'politicianists', the professional politicians. Political rule could only be a singular form of rule, without giving expression to plural interests within society, as the state should represent the unanimity of the nation. In contrast to the inefficacy, indecisiveness, and artificial nature of democratic pluralism, a new political form, which embodied the essential Romanian value of Eastern Orthodoxy, would be able to unite the political leaders and the people (Volovici 1991: 62). According to Codreanu, in a new political form the distinction between ruler and ruled dissolved, as based on 'total agreement', the leader embodying the expression of the will of the people (see Codreanu 1974: 266-7).[181] The Fascist discourse further underlined the importance of a messianic ruling class that would be able to set the example and teach the Romanian nation to renovate itself and become new. A 'new aristocracy' based on virtù and spiritual quality was needed (Codreanu 1973: 78).

Finally, fascist thinkers promulgated various forms of corporatism as alternatives to the liberal-democratic state.[182] The organisation of the state and state-society relations

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[181] The leader of the Legion of the Archangel Michael or Iron Guard, Codreanu, expressed the messianic character of the ruler in his *Pentru legionari* (For the Legionaries): '... the leader is not anymore a 'master', a 'dictator' that does what he wants and rules according to his own will: he becomes the expression, the incarnation of this invisible spiritual state, the symbol of this enlightened condition that underpins the entire national community. And thus the leader does not do what he wants, but what he needs to do. His action is not based on individual interests or on those of the present national community, but on the interests of the eternal Ancestry, of the eternal nation, from which the conscience of the peoples stems. In the sense of those latter interests - and only in the sense of these - individual interests as well as collective ones will reach their maximum level of satisfaction and conciliation' (Codreanu 1973: 268). A similar vision was promoted by Nae Ionescu, see Voicu 1998b.

[182] Amongst these thinkers we might count Mihail Manoilescu, who was not a fascist in any strict sense, but who in his political opinions moved close to the extreme right-wing and formulated the most elaborate account of corporatism in his *Century of corporatism* (*Secolul corporatismului*) of

should take the form of professional, corporatist structures. Through corporatist structures, the state could give expression to the direct public interest (whereas the democratic state and the system of universal suffrage could only represent particular interests). Instead of being neutral, as the liberal state was, the corporatist state would be the 'bearer of values' and would therefore directly serve the national interest and national solidarity (Love 1996: 96; Ornea 1995: 46-50).

1934 (see Love 1996: 95-8). Manoilescu was criticised, however, by one of the leaders of the Iron Guard, Ion Moța, for promulgating merely a rational theory of corporatism, explaining the 'mechanism', without taking into account the real problems of contemporary society. The real problem which needed solving, according to Moța, was the Jewish problem, the solution of which would lead to a spiritual regeneration rather than a mere technical transformation of the state (Moța 1978: 207-20).

9. Communism and modernity

9.1 Communism as a project of modernisation

The changes in 1989 resulted in the widespread perception of 'really existing socialism' as a 'failed revolt against modernity' (Arnason 2000b: 61). However, to understand the communist societies as essentially anti-modern projects, undermining the original modern version, hides a number of important insights from view. Firstly, as in any society in which the idea of human autonomy gains a foothold, i.e. the idea that people can shape their own social context, various perceptions on how to change and mould society emerge. Conflict and strife over specific reform pathways are therefore inherent in any modern or modernising society. It is in this sense that the communist societies were modern Ultimately, conflict occurred over the interpretation of autonomy, or in other words over collectivist or individualist interpretations of society. The party-state strove for the realisation of collective autonomy through a 'revolution from above', basing its superior claim to knowledge on the Leninist myth of the vanguard and its access to 'objective truth'. This dominant ideology had to compete with forms of Westernism in which the individualist values of pluralism and liberalisation were evoked, and rival collectivist understandings of society, mostly in the form of nationalism (cf. Arnason 1993: 145). In some Eastern European countries a more individualist understanding eventually gained ground (Hungary, Czechoslovakia), whereas in others communist collectivism was reinforced through absorbing nationalism (Romania, Albania).

Secondly, the 'derived' communist projects in Eastern Europe consisted of a complex and sometimes ambivalent coalescence of distinct dimensions of Western modernity, in which certain aspects were exaggerated or radicalised whereas others were subordinated: a) 'really existing socialism' constituted a continuation and radicalisation of the Enlightenment project in its instrumental rationality and 'quantity drive' (in this sense the concept was completely opposite to the romantic anti-capitalist dimension of the other 'totalitarian' type of society, fascism); b) Marxist thought and to a certain extent 'really existing socialism' absorbed romanticist critiques of Western

modernity by condemning particular negative effects of capitalist society (alienation, commodification, etc.), articulated in a nostalgia for a post-capitalist future (see Löwy 1981: 85); and, c) the East European varieties all eventually had to come to terms with pre-communist traditions, so that the communist ideology in one way or the other had to absorb or coexist with traditions of nationalism and Westernism. This complex and multiple understanding of modernity could be found in Romanian Communism as it comprised a continued but radicalised understanding of modernity in its project of 'Promethean modernity' (Ray 1996: 46), consisting of increased rationalisation and bureaucratisation, while at the same time incorporating its own tradition of nationalism and romanticism by re-introducing organicist understandings of the community.

The continuation of the Enlightenment project was highly visible in the manner by which the communist regimes attempted to realise their objectives, which may be understood as either a pathology of the 'original' modern project in its extreme pursuit of rational mastery or as a particularly technocratic understanding of modernity (Arnason 1993: 7; Bauman 2001a: 63; von Beyme 1994: 45). Societal goals such as increased levels of urbanisation and industrialisation were pursued through a relatively extreme form of instrumental rationality and belief in technical progress. The absolute priority of these goals crowded out considerations of general welfare and individual autonomy (for instance, in Romania, as in many other countries in the region, rates of investment in industry were continuously adjusted upwards to the detriment of social spending on housing, food, etc.). Such an approach to socio-economic transformation resulted in a one-sided perception of collective mobilisation through education and labour for the development of the national economy. Both education and the labour process were therefore disproportionately aimed at the absorption of technical knowledge and the construction and expansion of specific sectors of the economy, while neglecting other spheres of society and science. This also meant that 'non-productive' spheres of society, such as the arts and literature, were co-opted to the ideological purposes of the Party. This unevenness of (early) communist societies can be called 'Promethean modernity', in which means became ends, and society was overwhelmingly geared at 'gigantism, Fordist mass production and consumption; an extensive, corporatist and rationalized state; a secular (and often etatist) ideology; cultural homogeneity governed by the ethos of technology and the culture industry'

(Ray 1996: 46). Instead of aiming for the maximisation of profits, as in capitalist societies, communist societies maximised accumulation, production for its own sake (Crowther 1988: 9; Ray 1996: 83), although the latter formulation seems to obscure the underlying social objective of the socialist regimes (Fehér *et al.* 1983: 33).[183]

To grasp the continuity of romanticist critiques in Marxism and in the ideology of 'really existing socialist' societies we should make a short excursion into the romantic impact on Marxist thought in general and its implications for 'later modernising societies'. The idea of 'universal human emancipation' informed romanticist thought strongly, just as it shaped crucial aspects of the communist projects. In the former it might be referred to as the need for emotional liberation, self-development or creativeness whereas in the latter it may be found – for example - in the concept of alienation (see Gouldner 1980: 200). In societies that distinguished themselves from Western Europe by their levels of socio-economic development critiques of Western modernity had a particularly 'urgent' impact, as emancipation was deemed necessary on both individual and collective/societal levels. Romanticism and the perception of underdevelopment by local intellectuals were strongly linked as in romanticism backwardness was articulated either in a sense of shame and therefore the sense of need for action or, alternatively, it led to an enhanced self-understanding, that is, a source of pride (as in German romantic conservatism), in reality often taking the form of a 'volatile mixture of both' (Berman 1982: 43). This tense mixture consists of the dual search for 'progress' or 'individual and collective self-development' on the one hand, and 'authenticity' on the other. As an analysis of society and as a guiding ideology for societal change, Marxism picked up on this tension in its idea of 'development as the form of the good life' (Berman 1982: 98), that is to say, in how it perceived personal liberation and authenticity as achievable through continuous development. The revolutionary dimension of romanticism as human liberation through action was combined with a nostalgic dimension of romanticism that longs for an earlier social state, nostalgia for the past thus being projected into the future (Löwy 1981: 85). The capitalist present was rejected in favour of a future society that recovers elements of the dissolved past (e.g., a sense of community). Here we can also discern a continuity

[183]Verdery suggests that these systems were mainly enhancing the *capacity* of the apparatus to allocate resources, not so much resources per se (Verdery 1991: 75; see also Ray 1996: 70).

between elements of fascism, interwar cultural pessimism and the projects of 'really existing socialism' in that all of them criticised capitalism for destroying original human relations and creating disenchantment throughout modern society (cf. Heller 1986: 254).

The re-emergence of traditions in the East European communist societies was related to the mode of imposition and absorption of communism in these societies. The imposed and alien character of the Soviet model and the often fragile social position of local communists resulted in a continuous legitimation crisis in the East European satellites. Particular national experiences that re-emerged as national traditions were revived and reinterpreted to counter this lack of legitimation. In the early years, the establishment of communist societies had to allow for existing social structures and constructed national traditions, ideas and identities, as their claim to legitimacy was never very strong in Eastern Europe, and when the Soviet Union relaxed its external grip on the satellite states the explicit utilisation of national traditions, was, if not inevitable, a likely step to be taken by local élites. In Romania, the re-emergence of pre-war features became visible after a period of imposed communism by Moscow, although these features did not retain their original form and were almost continuously challenged, both from within the Communist Party and from the side of the intellectuals. It would be misleading to portray the re-emergence of pre-communist structures and ideas as a predetermined process, an evolution that sooner or later had to occur. In some societies assimilation of the Soviet model was effectuated with more zeal and depth than in others, although no society displayed a complete absorption or subordination to the model. In the Romanian context, as in other parts of Eastern Europe, struggle over the definition of Communism partly led to the rediscovery of older values and ideas, and a reconfirmation of a dimension of romanticist critique that had been present to varying extents in both the liberal and fascist worldviews. In some countries, such as Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, struggles between doctrinarians and dissident voices led to the re-appropriation of bourgeois liberalism, which in the latter years of the communist regimes resulted in a coalition between party technocrats and dissident forces and their mutual commitment to transform communist society (Eyal *et al.* 1998: 11). Indeed, such a route, based on reforming the communist system by introducing some market elements, was a possibility opened up by the (temporary) experimentation with the New Economic Policy in the Soviet Union of the

1920s (Ray 1996: 121). In contrast, in Romania, a short period of economic and political liberalisation did occur in the early post-Stalinist years, but was quickly subsumed under a form of national Communism, which did not so much aim at the rationalisation of the economic system as the increased mobilisation of society in the name of the original communist project. One could in this sense speak of a process of re-Stalinisation rather than liberalisation.

Normative premises

The general features of the communist model – as a 'reference model' for emulation – can be deconstructed with the help of the conceptual map introduced in chapter 3.

1. Cultural inspiration. The communist model of modernisation was presented through 'a claim to universal validity and world-historical legitimacy' (Arnason 2000a: 79). Communism was formulated as an explicit alternative to liberal modernity and claimed to transcend its major complications. The alternative modernity promulgated by communists entailed a universal model which would eradicate the alienating and exploitational features of the Western, liberal model of the market economy and formal democracy (the latter was considered the mere extension of the dominant forces present in the former) and claimed a more complete fulfilment of the Enlightenment programme. The Soviet Union could therefore espouse the aim of a world revolution that held the possibility of the liberation of the working class (and, in turn, humanity as such) from oppression and alienation everywhere. Marx's original project ultimately had been about the universal emancipation of humanity (Walicki 1995) and the project of 'actually existing socialism' with its world-wide thrust cannot be fully understood without exploring this fundamental element. The Marxist/communist project not only promised to eradicate material poverty in modern society but also to re-unite mankind and to reconcile humanity with its essence. Communism's revolutionary programme did not merely promulgate an alternative vision of modern society, but was based on a utopian conception of future society that was not only to be realised by voluntaristic means but whose realisation was based on an understanding of the meaning of history and the laws of its progression. In this sense, the communist programme held transcultural meaning as it could be applied in different circumstances (in particular by

means of the theory of the vanguard) and provided pseudo-scientific means to identify its end-goal.

As the communist programme claimed to bring about an absolute rupture with the past and a total transformation of society, the new order could said to be 'in principle transcending any primordial, national, or ethnic units' (Eisenstadt 1999: 107). The universalistic foundations of communism did not however prevent partial reconciliation with more particularistic understandings of the social order. Stalin's 'socialism in one country', which was proclaimed against the tenet of the world revolution and at least temporarily sought the consolidation of the revolution in a single country, could be understood as one such compromise of the universalistic and revolutionary premises of communism in favour of its local embedment. It was also Stalin who wedded the communist ideal with that of the construction of a national communist state, whose economic development was explicitly tied to its independence and whose existence was legitimised through reference to national symbols (cf. Walicki 1995: 415-6).

2. Political foundations. The communist project criticised the view of freedom contained in individualist liberalism on the grounds of its mere formal and illusionary status. The purely negative and individualist form of freedom promulgated in liberalism added up to nothing more than a legally guaranteed set of rights, leading to political equality, without resolving social and economic inequality between individuals. The inequalities in the socio-economic sphere and their recreation on the level of the state structurally impeded the non-owning classes to politically voice their interests (cf. Held 1987: 120-1). According to the Marxist view, such a situation of structural inequality and unfreedom for the larger part of the population could only be overcome by the collective emancipation of the subordinated class, the working class. Only through the emancipation of the proletariat as a collectivity, by transcending the class antagonisms and structural conditions that prevented the subordinated classes from being free (private ownership and the market) could freedom be realised. Freedom was not just the result of the emancipation of the collective (the working class) from the oppressive bonds of class society, but was a 'communal' form of freedom in the sense that it could only be achieved in a collective way, through the control of society by the collectivity itself (cf. Walicki 1995: 13-4).

The negative freedom of liberalism could be seen as incommensurable with the conception of positive freedom of communism (Walicki 1995: 24). In the Marxist vision, freedom was linked to the cancellation of the modern individual's alienation – 'the dependence or loss of potent subjecthood' (Gouldner 1980: 200). Emancipation, or the retrieval of 'potent subjecthood', was perceived as freeing the worker from exploitation by the capital owning classes, from 'objective dependence' on the market economy, and from dependence of the individual on material needs. To emancipate the individual, a form of positive freedom was promulgated which would retrieve the original unity of the community through the elimination of class conflict, the abolition of private ownership, and the release of the human being from dependence on extra-human elements (material scarcity, market relations).

3. Social and political practices. The communist project of modernisation was based on the substantive notions of distributive justice, the emancipation of the subordinated classes and the retrieval of communal unity, along with the eradication of material scarcity. These substantive values informed its vision of the role of the state, society and economy, while subordinating the formal rationality of the capitalist economy to the premises of communism. Politically, the totalitarian form of the party-state embodied retrieved unity and expressed the general will of the people. The collapse of the state into society meant that formally class antagonisms were abolished and political strife abandoned, and collective energy thus released for the project of economic prosperity. Where fascism explicitly denounced capitalism, at least on the ideological level, in communism part of its logic was incorporated in the project of modernisation, as the economic organisation of communist society was deemed superior to the capitalist one and capable of transcending its problematic features. In communism, 'capitalist culture' (Gouldner 1980: 213; see also Ray 1996), at least in terms of the primacy of the economy and industrial modernisation, was reproduced.[184] The values of efficiency,

[184] Thus Walicki on Marx: '[H]e [Marx] was inevitably *more hostile to the market than to capitalism as a system of large-scale factory production:* the factory was for him a great step forward to rational planning and organization, while the market was synonymous with anarchy and blind necessity' (Walicki 1995: 6). In a similar vein, Lenin was hostile to the market economy but less so to 'capitalism as a mode of production because the latter could assume the form of rationally controlled state capitalism' (Walicki 1995: 5).

bureaucratisation, and calculability were in this sense inherent in any communist discourse, although the subordination of this form of formal-instrumental rationality to substantive goals and political domination thoroughly changed its overall logic.

The conception of the state in communism and fascism has rightfully been subsumed under the definition of a totalitarian state. Neither fascist nor communist states recognised the formal division between state and society in liberalism. In communism, the state was ultimately expected to wither away, but was revived through its equation with Lenin's vanguard party and Stalin's re-acknowledgement of the role of the state in building socialism. As society re-absorbed the economy, in other words, as it was subjected to the control of the collectivity at large, the state was the instrument through which this control was exercised. As the state represented the people in its entirety, state intervention knew no limits. The unlimited sphere state action was wedded with an understanding of the vanguard party or 'dictatorship of the proletariat' as constituted by professional revolutionaries who had exclusive access to the ultimate and absolute knowledge of history and society (Lefort 1986: 283): 'The Party embodied the centre of knowledge and action; it attracted to itself those who could only theorize, because it *was* theory, and those who could only practise, because it *was* practice'.

The merger of state and society, and the formal abandonment of any recognition of an autonomous civil society signified the complete identification of the state with society. The idea of a social contract as inherent in the civic-political idea of a 'thin' membership of society was explicitly condemned for its resulting 'egoism' and its inherent incapacity to represent the community as a whole. In this sense, the conception of membership in communist discourse could be seen as a 'thick' understanding of membership, i.e. as a political community whose members shared social solidarity. Social solidarity as the primary form of social bond was almost exclusively identified with the working class, and only with difficulty applied to the peasantry and intellectuals. The elevation of the working class to the status of the people as such provided the means for the creation of boundaries. In other words, the party-state was able to identify as 'class enemy' or 'enemy of the people' those that were deemed a direct threat to the unity of the working class. By the same token, those classes or social groups that were deemed socially neutral or potentially co-operative could be identified.

Modes of legitimation

The dominant mode of legitimation or claim to legitimacy made in communist programmes was a form of goal-rational legitimation. The claim to transcend the prior existing order (either oppressive non-democratic regimes or formal democracies) by establishing a more exemplary order based on the 'validity of principal social goals' (egalitarianism, human autonomy, economic prosperity, and in some cases, the prosperity of the nation) formed a central and essential element of communist discourses (Pakulski 1986: 44). Therefore, the immanent normative nature of the promulgated model (communism), as opposed to other societal models, in itself conveyed a highly significant form of legitimation. This also meant that formal rationality, as the key form of rationality in the bureaucratisation and rationalisation of society, was always subsumed to the substantive goals of the project.

These normative values were embodied by the core institution of communist systems, the vanguard party or 'dictatorship of the proletariat', which, both as the self-defined professional revolutionary movement and as the enlightened élite with exclusive access to superior knowledge of the workings of socialist society, claimed significant forms of legitimation. As Heller remarks: 'The Bolshevik Party conceived of itself as a revolutionary power, as the embodiment of a complete break with Russian tradition' (Feher *et al.* 1983: 140). The vanguard's role was that of the 'executor of a world-historical necessity, of the vanguard of world-revolution, of the repository of the future, of the embodiment of the real interests of the proletariat inside and outside Russia' (Feher *et al.* 1983: 140-1). The imaginary of the vanguard party conveyed the absolute values of the communist project, including the image of unity between party and society, popular sovereignty, and the promise of a utopian future order (the latter was especially true since the vanguard's role was formally understood as temporary). Apart from embodying the absolute normative orientations of the project, by referring to a self-created revolutionary tradition the vanguard party could - to a limited extent - claim a form of traditional legitimacy (cf. Feher *et al.* 1983: 140). The party-state, in concomitance with the absolute ruler, also claimed a form of charismatic legitimation in its allusion to omnipotence, i.e. the absolute, scientifically based knowledge of history and the future, and the capacity to bring about a complete transformation of the social order (cf. Arnason 1993: 105-6; Jowitt 1992; Tarifa 1997: 449-50). Auxiliary modes of

legitimation - of particular importance in moments of legitimation crisis - were to be found in a negative reference either to prior existing regimes or to contemporary societies. More important as legitimating 'solutions' was the recourse to substantive rationality, i.e. material redistribution (although strictly speaking this is a form of political action rather than discursive legitimation), the gradual introduction of forms of formal-legal rationality (as happened intermittently in Eastern Europe from the 1950s onwards), and the utilisation of nationalist symbols.

9.2 The Romanian national Communist project

In the early years of communism (from 1944 onwards), the strategy of 'emulation' pursued by the Communist party indicated a strong subordination to the Soviet Union, a weak domestic status of the party, and the absence of a clear ideology and political programme (Denize 2002; Jowitt 1971: 102). Although a Romanian Communist movement had existed in the interwar period, its party line was the complete subordination to the demands of the Communist International (King 1980; Tismăneanu 2003). Local traditions of Marxist thought were ignored, so that the Communist party found itself without any Marxist tradition to drawn on after the Second World War. Initially, the legitimation of the Communist project was sought through explicit reference to the external Soviet model, based on proletarian internationalism and the construction of a classless society. Marxism-Leninism promulgated the emancipation of one single class, the working class, while - at least in the early stages of the project - national identities were renounced and any validity of national traditions was denied.[185] One might say that in the Communist project, as in the Liberal project, the Romanian pathway was heavily informed by a model constituted by 'successful' external experience, introduced against dominant local models. As communism was imposed

[185] In contrast, as elaborated on above, interwar fascism had above all been legitimated by explicit reference to a 'national specificity', which drew on an 'authentic' national past, denying the legitimacy of foreign elements. Although Nazi Germany and fascist Italy provided auxiliary underpinnings for the Fascist counterproject, external models never constituted an exclusive legitimation for a totalitarian Romanian project, as the Fascist movement had strong national, social and ideational roots.

'from without' local autonomy remained restricted in its early phase. What is important here is that although some national communist parties started out without any strong national basis (the Romanian party was the smallest of the region, see Boia 2002), through subordination to the Soviet Union they could fortify their national position considerably, through local 'ideological unity' and 'bureaucratic cohesion' (see Lefort 1986: 56). The Soviet model and subordination to it were then not only crucial factors in organising local revolutionary élites, but also in providing them with the ideological means to oppose either the bourgeoisie or fascist groups in society. The eventually recovered autonomy of the Romanian Communist party did, however, not lead to a reformist, national pathway of de-Stalinisation, as in Hungary and Poland, but permitted the re-activation of interwar autochthonous traditions. A fusion of Stalinism with radical nationalism allowed the Ceauşescu-regime to diverge from reformist trends and pursue an isolationist and hypercentralised project until 1989.

Crisis narrative

Despite the imposed nature of communism on Romanian society, we can speak of (conceptual) continuity and compatibility with the interwar debate on modernity. As seen in chapter 5 and 8, anti-liberalism and anti-democratic sentiments were widespread in interwar Romania, and not only confined to the political extremes of the extreme left and right (cf. Preda 1998). In terms of traditions of ideas, communism fitted in with a general climate of 'cultural pessimism' and not only overlapped with radical viewpoints in terms of the critique on Western ideas and institutions (the malfunctioning and hypocrisy of democracy), but also offered a radically new solution to the problem of modernisation. On the question of the political order, communism reproached democracy for its partial and merely formal representation of society.[186] Democracy was perceived as ultimately being an expression of the interests of the bourgeoisie, and thereby as continuing in the political sphere the economic exploitation of the working

[186] Communist democratic centralism thus entailed an upgrading of democracy, as, for instance, attested to in the Party Program of the Romanian Communist Party of 1974: 'The incontestable superiority of socialist democracy is evermore confirmed in respect to the bourgeois one, which limits itself to formally proclaiming certain democratic rights, but which does not assure the material conditions and the adequate social framework for their exercise' (RCP 1975: 165).

class. Communism further invoked a critique of modern civilisation, which it blamed for the destruction of traditional social relations, for contributing to the alienation of individuals from society, and for the creation of continuous disharmony as a result of class struggle. The reintegration of the individual into a new community was deemed necessary as any human being was essentially a social being. This meant the 'priority of society or community over the individual', conceived within the form of a modern socialist nation and state (Bracher 1984: 52, 98). The necessity of creating a new community not only revealed communism's departure from liberal society but also its continuous reference to liberalism's main tenets; the unity of the people and government by the people formed part of communism's main understanding of society, although the liberal understanding of freedom as a form of negative freedom of the individual was rejected.[187]

Regarding problématiques of an economic nature, the communist ideal stressed the disharmonious (class antagonism) and exploitative effects of capitalism on society and argued for a re-embedding of the economy in society. As opposed to the limited adherence to social equality in liberalism, communism made social equality its primary objective. Real democracy could only be achieved through the elimination of inequality, which, in turn, could only be realised through the emancipation of the exploited classes,

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[187] Ceauşescu aptly articulated this conception in 1968, when addressing a general meeting of Romanian writers: 'In socialism man becomes free not because he is exempted from the influence of social laws, but rather because, understanding their imperative necessity, he acts, in their spirit, for the conscious building of society. Therefore, individual liberty does not contradict society's general interests, but, on the contrary, serves these interests. Therefore, whenever activities disregarding the general interest are registered... society is entitled to take the necessary measures... to prevent harming the collective's interests' (cited in: Shafir 1983: 417). Or as stated in the Party Program of 1974: 'Petty bourgeois liberalism, [with its] concepts of so-called absolute, unlimited freedom, the individualist attitudes, which do not take into account the general interests of society, have nothing in common with real socialist democracy. The wide development of rights and freedom of citizens in the context of our order, [and] the deepening and perfection of socialist democracy cannot be perceived outside of the context of the social responsibility of every single person with regard to the general interests of society, outside the context of the conscious obligation of everyone to do the utmost for the wellbeing and happiness of the entire people, for the cause of socialism and communism' (RCP 1975: 166)

i.e. the proletariat.[188] The liberation of the working class would not only emancipate the population in an economic sense, but also in a political one, as economic emancipation would end all societal conflicts. The Communists thus argued against liberal-capitalist claims for the necessity of the autonomy of the economy and the functioning of the 'blind laws' of capitalism as the best guarantor of social harmony; their critique was then aimed against the institutions in which this autonomy was based (private property, the bourgeois state). At the same time, however, in Stalinism the Communists preserved and radicalised the capitalist developmental model - based on industrialisation and extensive growth - as well as a 'capitalist culture'[189]. A similar view was held on questions of culture. Western rationalism was not countered by a mystical or spiritual world-view, as in fascism, but was instead integrated into the communist world-view, where the claim was made that communism's deeper understanding of rationalism (in its pseudo-scientific knowledge of historical laws through historical materialism and the superior rationality of planning) would lead to the transcendence of Western modernity and the creation of a superior society, in which the individual would enjoy a fuller kind of emancipation. Communism's critique of Western individualism was intimately related to a 'new man', who would not be imbued with materialist and egocentric-individualist behaviour, but would act from a sense of community and moderation.

The Romanian interpretation of communism: national Communism

The singularity of the Romanian pattern of communism consisted of its demand for national sovereignty, its perseverance on the Stalinist path, and the re-activation of a radically particularist nationalism. A short elaboration on the implications for local autonomy of the adoption of the Soviet experience as a local model of development is therefore warranted. Specific elements in Stalinism could function as pretexts for local autonomy in the emulating countries. In Romania, the insistence on the right to national

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[188] In the fascist critique, the problématique was equally perceived as the destructive effects of modern society, but the solution (re-embedding) was to be achieved through the national community, i.e. by creating 'organic' harmony between classes, whereas communism promoted class struggle.

[189] That is to say, in Stalinism labour discipline, the intensification of production and increased capital investment persisted, as economic activity was deemed the height of modern society (and socialist construction) (Gouldner 1980: 212-3).

sovereignty eventually provided the context in which radical nationalism could re-emerge.

In its interpretation of modern society, the Communist project was initially less concerned with the integration of the polity and state-society relations than with the construction of a socialist system as such (see Jowitt 1971). The adoption of the Soviet model predominantly signified system-building, i.e. its main concern lay in establishing the absolute authority of a party leadership that would subsequently control the project of constructing socialism 'from above', through innovations such as the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' and 'democratic centralism'. Of overriding importance was the creation and consolidation of an independent ruling élite/party that would be in a position to implement and control the Communist project of modernisation. The project of constructing 'socialism in one country' in itself was strongly identified with 'rapid economic development' and 'the sustained mobilization of resources' (Jowitt 1992: 59-61), which pointed to the overriding priority of state-building and the relative negligence of other elements, such as national integration and distributive justice.

In spite of the uncritical emulation of the Stalinist model in the local contexts of the Eastern European countries, the 'People's Democracies' established immediately after World War II were not and could not be completely subordinated to and absorbed into the Soviet Union (Shoup 1962: 889-90). In the first instance, from 1944 until 1947, the 'People's Democracies' were created through the taking over of state power by the Communists, but still within the context of a formal democracy. In Romania, the so-called National Democratic Front performed this role, a coalition that comprised the Romanian Communist Party, the Social Democratic Party and some Communist front organisations (King 1980: 49). Once state power was captured, a point of no return was reached almost everywhere in Eastern Europe by 1947 (Brus 1977: 242), the process of building a socialist society in national contexts was initiated. In addition, after the break of the Soviet Union with Yugoslavia in 1948, the Soviet Union policy changed from a careful approach to the downright imposition of the Stalinist model. In this, any reference to 'national roads to communism' was condemned, leaving little room for independent development (Shoup 1962: 890). From that moment on, Stalinism as a model became of uttermost importance, in particular in a country such as Romania in which a communist tradition was largely absent and the local élite lacked in 'practical

ideology'. This absence initially led to a highly uncritical emulation of the Stalinist model (Jowitt 1971: 102). Nevertheless, in a paradoxical manner, the direct adoption of Stalinism and the creation of 'socialism in one country' laid the foundations for local autonomy. As Paul Shoup argues:

> In one sense, at least, [the adoption of Stalinism] suggested more, not less power for the new Communist states: if the East European nations could duplicate the Soviet performance, they might one day become her equals. Imitation of the Soviet Union, after all, did not necessarily imply subordination and dependence. It could also mean power and independence for each Communist nation separately.

This ambiguity immanent in the Stalinist model of modernisation was exactly the fact that eventually allowed a 'national road' to emerge in Romania.[190] Indeed, one may go as far as to say that in 1948 Stalinisation already corresponded to the aspirations of *both* local and Soviet élites. The fact that the Romanian Communist Party engaged in the emulation of the Stalinist experience later enabled it to expand its own local power and to hold on to its own - Stalinist - vision of socialist construction. Over time, the Communist party was increasingly able to control all forms of power in the domestic sphere, as provided by the Leninist concept of the vanguard party. The credo of the vanguard party - assigning it a superior knowledge of objective conditions and therefore of historical necessities - remained a crucial concept throughout the whole communist period. In this way, any opposition outside of the party could be silenced (both Gheorghiu-Dej and Ceauşescu made use of this mechanism), and any attempt at crisis narration produced by opponents could be repressed. The Communist party, which through its absorption of the state and subsequent policies to mobilise and invade society in almost all of its facets, established an absolute monopoly on all forms of

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[190] This immanent quality of the Stalinist model has been aptly described by Arnason (1993: 133): '... the Soviet centre insisted on the reproduction of basic structures of the model within each unit of the bloc. The emphasis was, in other words, on conformity and homogeneity rather than integration. But when the balance of power between the centre and the periphery was upset by crises or conflicts within the imperial apparatus, small-scale versions of the Soviet model could serve as a basis for separate strategies. An institutional complex that had originally taken shape in an imperial context and continued to embody an imperial logic was, in such cases, adapted to the more limited purposes of states in quest of autonomy from the imperial centre and trying to maximize both their power over their own societies and their position in the international arena'.

power and ideological truth. Although changes in the form of leadership could be discerned in almost all Soviet societies from Stalin's death in 1953 onwards (from autocratic to oligarchic rule), the basic prerogative and initiative always remained in the hands of the party.

Apart from the fact that 'socialism in one country' provided local élites with an organisational model and legitimacy, it also gave them the opportunity to protect and further national (economic and political) interests.[191] As such, the Stalinist developmental model could be regarded as a model of national autarchy. In this sense, 'socialism in one country' identified itself with the vision of the 'nation-state as a vehicle of progress', i.e. 'as the most effective socio-political mechanism by which change can be stimulated or channelled by a ruling élite or dominant class' (Shoup 1962: 887). The vision of the nation-state as the vehicle of progress was from the early 1960s onwards defended as the national Romanian model against interference from other communist countries and especially from the Soviet centre. The Stalinist model changed not so much in its social goals, but in the way it was defended: it could no longer be implemented by way of emulation, as the Soviets had changed course. It was instead defended by reference to the right of national self-determination and by the explicit interpretation of 'socialism in one country' for the common good. National Communism in the Romanian context implied the furthering of the nation-state through socialist construction, and in the process it opened up as well as necessitated new modes of legitimation. As Jowitt (1971: 220) has argued: 'From one point of view the commitment to industrialization mediated Gheorghiu-Dej's increasing appreciation of the nation-state. In turn, the "conditioned" value placed on the nation-state (by reason of its relation to continued industrialization) provided both an increasing legitimacy for the nation-state and a core around which other socio-political forces, having a more

[191] In the communist project, a logic in which industrialisation became an end in itself (Gouldner 1980: 217) seemed to have been set free, especially in the period of subordination to and emulation of the Soviet centre. However, in reality this logic could co-exist with the idea of national sovereignty, thus serving the goal of collective autonomy. This ambiguity remained present in Stalinism as its dynamics could serve both socialism and the concentration of local power: 'Stalinism is a social system in which industrialization becomes the key criterion of socialism's achievement and its legitimacy, and whose aim is the power of the new state rather than the contentment and welfare of its citizenry' (Gouldner 1980: 217-8).

complete appreciation of the role and value of the nation-state, could gather.' Nationalist symbols became increasingly important in defending the pursuit of a Stalinist developmental model and the conservative stance taken against revisionist projects emerging elsewhere in Eastern Europe, to 'preserve precisely those values, symbols and institutions questioned by the proponents of "socialism with a human face"' (Tismăneanu 1999: 167). The internal corollary of this highly defensive stance was the prevention of the emergence of rival élites or the loss of power of the centre, while painting a utopian image of a 'multilaterally developed socialist society' (see Palade 2000: 107-8).

I will analyse the shift from emulation to national autonomy to national isolationism by means of my conceptual model, consisting of the three concepts of cultural inspiration, political foundations, and socio-political practices.

1. Cultural inspiration. Whereas the interwar Fascist project had promulgated a radical particularist alternative to the Liberal project of modernisation, thereby eschewing any kind of universalistic logic, since society could only be founded on local values, the Communist project substituted the universalistic pretensions of liberalism for the equally universalistic claims of Marxism-Leninism. It was because of its universalistic pretensions that Stalinism could relatively easily supplant local discourses and offer a 'practical ideology' to social forces that opposed the status quo. The nationalist turn in Romanian Communism was then not so much a questioning of the universal validity of the main tenets of Stalinism, but a critique of the proposed subordination of the national interest to the supranational common good, i.e., of the Soviet Union and the more advanced satellite states. Initially, the nationalist turn was about the right to persevere in following the original Stalinist model. The insistence on the right to national sovereignty and independence in deciding the national course opened, however, the possibility not so much for a critique of the universalism inherent in Stalinism, but for a fusion of its universalistic tenets with a purely national and ultimately particularistic model.

On the one hand, Ceauşescuism contained claims that went beyond the national context, i.e., it promoted a world order in which it was the strength of the individual nation-states that guaranteed universal harmony. On the other hand, there were strong

tendencies towards isolationism, the rejection of any extraneous influence (both in the form of capitalist and Soviet imperialism), and an absolute commitment to distinct national values. In other words, a discourse of world unity through the unity of nation-states was paralleled by a radical particularist model in which anything beyond the national context lost all value (cf. Jowitt 1971: 233-292). The latter tendency moved the Romanian Communist project towards isolationism and autarchy, through the refusal to interact or 'compete' with other societies (Martin 2002b, c). The inward turn signified the re-activation of popular and rural traditions, and an essentialisation of national culture through the promulgation of distinct national origins (the 'Dacian independent central state') and a continuous and unified national history (Deletant 1998; Verdery 1991).

2. Political foundations. The early phase of Stalinism in Romania contained an idea of individual emancipation that went beyond the national context and underlined international class cohesion. Individual liberation was directly linked up with the liberation of the working class. The ultimate legitimation of the construction of socialist society was its potential for a more complete form of individual emancipation. The Romanian project - as in the other Eastern European countries - linked this emancipation directly to the abolition of private property and a collective drive towards industrialisation.[192] The national context in which the industrialisation process was initiated provided an 'objective', almost instrumentally perceived framework for the construction of communism. This universalist idea of individual emancipation through the establishment of communism remained a key factor in Communist discourse, both after the nationalist turn in the early 1960s and during Ceauşescuism.[193]

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[192] Gheorghiu-Dej, the first General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, formulated the emancipatory aspect as follows: 'To the existence of a developed industry is connected the existence of the working class which represents a guarantee of the democratization of public life, a guarantee of the liquidation of feudalism and landlords' (cited in: Jowitt 1971: 110).

[193] The Party Program of 1974 affirmed this in the following way: 'Communism does not lead, cannot lead to petty bourgeois levelling; to the contrary, it guarantees the best conditions for the affirmation of the human personality, for the affirmation of the creative force of any single individual. Freed from exploitation, working for himself and for society, being guaranteed all the conditions of affirmation, in an equal way, in every sector, man becomes really free and master of

With the nationalist turn of the early 1960s, the emphasis in Communist discourse was placed on the idea of collective negative liberty, i.e., the idea of the right to national sovereignty of every socialist state, equal rights between states, and the principle of non-interference. The argument for collective negative liberty - the removal of constraints on socialist nations preventing them from deciding their own course - consisted of the novel idea that the best way to realise communism in single countries was not to emulate as far as possible the Soviet model, but to pursue national paths in which internal possibilities could be used to their fullest. As stated in the Party Programme of 1974, 'the program of the Romanian Communist party indicates the ways for the application of [the universal laws of the theory of the proletarian revolution] in a creative way, [according to] the concrete historical, social, and national conditions of Romania' (RCP 1975: 92). This argument in itself had implications for the international movement of communism. The unity and solidarity among socialist nations was no longer perceived as the basis for national sovereignty, it was instead the independent development of singular states that was said to lead to a strong international movement. In other words, whereas before the parts were only expressions of the larger whole, they were now deemed to constitute that whole (cf. Jowitt 1971: 236).

The claim for independence and emphasis on non-interference pointed to possible diversity in the development of socialism in singular countries. In principle, this argument does not determine an approach in which national diversity becomes the absolute priority in the political project. To argue for relative variety in 'roads to socialism' does not necessarily imply the assertion of national diversity over internationalist values. The latter was however the case in Romanian national Communism, as the nationalist turn led to the re-emergence of nationalist values which were firmly embedded in local culture. The re-assertion of national values and thus the re-activation of national traditions ultimately resulted in the domination of nationalism over communism. Ceauşescuism entailed a *sui generis* ideological fusion of the main tenets of Stalinism and nationalism.

On the one hand, it was claimed that 'the interest for the flourishing of the socialist nation and of the national independent state cannot be contrary in any way to the

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his own destiny. This coincides with the freedom of the whole nation and of all mankind' (RCP 1975: 191).

development of collaboration, solidarity and reciprocal aid between the socialist countries, that the preoccupation for the reinforcement of the national state cannot be contrary to proletarian internationalism' (RCP 1975: 175). In this line of thought one can also read the concept of the 'socialist nation'.[194] On the other hand, however, Ceauşescuism entailed a strong emphasis on the particularism of national values, national diversity, and the national essence. In the more radical understanding of nationalism, national values served as the basis of national unity and integration, and were defined in contrast to the imposition of exogenous values. The conservation and development of these essential values tended to become more important than the project of socialism. The Romanian Communist Party criticised any infringement of national rights and rights to nationalism: 'Experience shows that the nation [and] the national state have not yet concluded their role in the scene of history, in the developed capitalist nations. The attempts to limit or negate the role of the nation, to ignore historical reality cannot lead to anything else than the stimulation of social and political contradictions. The tendency to enforce the dissolution of national states to subsequently pass to a formation of supranational organisms is in substance a new form of aspiration to dominate other peoples, an attempt to mask class oppression, to derail the popular masses from the struggle for the revolutionary transformation of society' (RCP 1975:

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[194] The *Mic Dicţionar Enciclopedic* (Small Encyclopaedic Dictionary) of 1972 defined the nation as follows: 'Nation. Historical form of human community, characterised by a community of language, territory, economic life, and physical style, which manifests itself, in essence, in a national cultural community and in the consciousnes of common origins and destiny. Bourgeois Nation = first type of historical nation, appeared in the enduring conditions of the capitalist relations of production; divided in antagonistic classes, in which the bourgeoisie has a dominant role. With the scope of consolidating and defending its class position, this [class] instigates and maintains national discord by propagating nationalism and chauvinism. Socialist Nation = new, superior type of nation, constituted on a qualitatively different economic, political, and ideological base, born in the process of the socialist revolution, in which the leading force is represented by the working class [which is] led by the marxist-leninist party. It is characterised by social homogeneity, a community of interests, and the fundamental aspirations of one class and friendly social strata. The victory of socialism has created the full conditions for its affirmation and multilateral development. The flourishing of every socialist nation represents an essential demand on which the strengthening of unity and cohesion of the socialist countries depends, increasing their influence over the advance of the whole mankind towards socialism' (1972: 618).

174; cf. Ceauşescu 1973a, b). The primary object of the Romanian Communist project was the collective rather than the individual. In the phase of emulation the collective was constituted by the 'most progressive force': the working class (always perceived as in alliance with the peasantry, and often as supported by intellectuals). In the national Communist phase, the working class was increasingly understood as the 'exponent of the entire nation' (Ceauşescu 1973a: 74), whereas later the nation came to substitute the proletariat entirely (cf. Gabanyi 2000).

3. Socio-political practices. Three key 'logics' underpinned the Communist project of the reconstruction of society: the construction of communist society (in itself predominantly based on the one-sided 'myth' of industrialisation); the totalistic vision of the party-state; and the 'myth' of national continuity.

The core feature of any Communist project was its adherence to the 'industrial mythology' (Boia 2002). The nineteenth-century model of industrial society constituted the basis of a new and allegedly qualitatively superior societal form. The transformation of the economy was envisaged in terms of accelerated industrialisation and the collectivisation of agriculture, and both as (inter-related) expressions of communism's 'revolt against backwardness', and its promise to surpass capitalist systems in terms of productivity. In fact, as in the previous projects of modernisation, a major element of the Communist project was competition with societies that were deemed more advanced. The Communist project tried to formulate an answer to the negative aspects of capitalist society - in this sense adhering to particular crisis narrations of liberal capitalist society - and therefore to transcend it. The Soviet model did not only provide local élites with a mixture of criticism/crisis narration on capitalism and its liberal ideology, but also built on a revived sentiment of 'backwardness'.[195] Crisis narration and competition with the West were thus major drives behind communism's extreme emphasis on economic progress and concomitant industrialisation.[196] A further

[195] This was best expressed in Ceauşescu's adoption of the label 'developing country' for Romania.

[196] As noted by Ray: 'the spatial organization of the world into more and less developed regions coincided with a temporal sequence, through which different societies were situated along a developmental continuum. As a consequence, according to Marx, the more developed country industrially shows the less developed the image of its own future (Marx 1978: 416). This assumption is relevant to the Soviet experience (and to developing countries for which the Soviet

consideration behind the absolute, and thus substantive, commitment to the rationalisation of the economy – along with the critical and developmental ones - was the consideration of its emancipatory potential, i.e. its promise to rid society of traditional constellations (what Jowitt calls 'breaking through', 1971). Economic considerations were complemented by aspirations to destroy prior existing social relations and to construct a new society in the name of the collective, and based on the equal distribution of material benefits and employment. In this, the Communist project of modernisation involved a firm commitment to the substantive goals of emancipation and progress through the profound transformation (in terms of value commitments) and industrialisation of society.

The transplantation of the Stalinist model to the national context further signified the recreation of a revolutionary élite, whose messianic mission was based on an alleged insight into the 'objective' needs of the working class, a superior knowledge of the laws of history, and a self-identification as a revolutionary élite.[197] But perhaps more important was the pretence of the revolutionary élite, carried on later in the institutionalised form of the party-state, to be the emanation of the collectivity, understood either as class or as nation. The Communist project can be read as a political project to further unity, harmony, and integration, against the differentiating and disintegrating forces of modern capitalist society (cf. Arnason 1998). Whereas in the early years of Romanian Communism the defence of the collective interest was tied to the universalist objectives of the international communist movement, in the later phase of national Communism the collective interest was increasingly defined in narrow,

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system was regarded as exemplary) where the goal was to compress this time difference through accelerated industrialization. In the process, moreover, Soviet communism would not only overcome its temporal distance from the West, but would surpass it, to create a new civilization that prefigured the future of Western societies themselves' (Ray 1996: 16).

[197] One of the many relevant statements here is: 'The tasks related to the realisation of the historical mission of the proletariat in the new society necessitate the organisational and political association of the working class, the establishment of a unitary marxist-leninist vanguard party of the working class. The creation of a unitary party of the working class - the Romanian Workers Party - was a significant victory of the revolutionary forces of our country and fulfilled an urgent historical necessity, required by the struggle for the conquest of power and socialist conversion of the Romanian society' (Ceauşescu 1971 [1967]: 62).

particularist terms. By insisting on its role in defending and enhancing the unity of the Romanian people through the continuous oppression and elimination of disharmonious elements in society the Romanian Communist party was able to continue in its position as the leading force as well as to indigenise the Communist project. The party became the leading force in the realisation of both social and national emancipation. Paradoxically, the responsibility and the leading role of the party increased as ideal of the socialist society was approached, whilst at the same time it proclaimed an evermore organic unity with the people.

The indigenisation of communism was achieved by a revision of history in national Communism. The establishment of socialism was no longer to be conceived as an absolute break with the old, with the preceding order, but was now seen as the outcome of a logical, historical continuation of the struggle for national liberation. The struggle for liberation was traced back to the Daco-Roman origins of the Romanian nation and Romanian history reread as the 'history of continuous class struggle, of the struggle led by the popular masses for freedom and social justice, for the defence of the national entity and independence for progress and civility' (RCP 1975: 94-5). The emulation of the Stalinist model was encapsulated into the nationalist project for autonomy. The main logic of the former, industrialisation, was now understood as not only a way to overcome economic backwardness and to achieve social justice, but equally as a means towards the realisation of national independence and sovereignty (RCP 1975: 118). The Communist project became increasingly a project of 'nationalising nationalism' as national interest was equated with the interest of the ethnic majority. The archetypal member of the national Communist society was a combination of the New Man (scientific knowledge, dedicated to the construction of Communism), ethnic Romanian ('autochthonous-patriotic feelings'), and proletarian (or peasant, rather than intellectual) (cf. Gabanyi 2000).

Changing modes of legitimation

Apart from domestic legitimation, i.e. Communism's explicit confrontation with the prior modern projects (liberalism and fascism) in Romanian society and its mission to undo and transform their most distinctive elements, communism was, simultaneously, an attempt to compete with other contemporary societies in terms of human

emancipation and socio-economic progress, as well as an attempt to enhance the collective autonomy of its 'own' society in the international system. In this sense, we can roughly distinguish between a need for legitimation in the domestic sphere (in order to justify the Communist project over other 'available' projects) and a roughly comparable need in the international sphere, both to define its position towards the Soviet Union and, in more systemic terms, to enhance its status in terms of political and socio-economic development (cf. Holmes 1993: 24-25).

Within the need for *domestic* legitimation one can distinguish various modes of legitimation that define the relationship between the ruling élite and the bureaucracy as well as between the ruling élite and society at large. It was the external nature of their ideology that caused a major problem for the East European élites in terms of domestic legitimation, in other words, the Soviet model was in dire need of rejustification within the domestic context.[198] Relative and temporary rejustification in the Romanian context were achieved in a number of ways. First of all, the absolute values pursued in the Soviet project were presented as of direct relevance in the Romanian context. Initially, local relevance was not expressed in terms of enhanced local autonomy or the consolidation of the Romanian nation. But the transposition of the theory of class struggle as the motor of history could be effectively used against claim to legitimacy by the interwar political parties. The absolute values of Soviet communism (the building of socialism; the transcendence of capitalism; the transcendence of class antagonism) clearly had their historical-situational relevance in post-war Romania. In the Romanian case, particular components of Marxism-Leninism (the universal role of the working class, a supersession of 'anachronistic' nationalism by universalism) were at a later stage displaced by nationalist symbols, significantly changing the absolute values of the project. The socialist nation in Romanian Communism metamorphosed into a historical

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[198] Féher *et al.* (1983: 137-8) claim that the communist regimes in Eastern Europe faced a 'permanent legitimation crisis', because the system was only endorsed by a very small number of people (in essence the ruling élite) and the population had an exemplary alternative image of society in the form of Western society. One might question the permanent nature of legitimation crises (see Holmes 1993), as the East European communist societies continued to persist also after direct Soviet influence decreased. One could say that East European societies were more exposed to nationalism and Westernism, and therefore more susceptible to crises of legitimation (see Arnason 1993: 145).

stage in the rapprochement of the socialist ideal. Secondly, the self-identification of the local Communist party with the Soviet model enabled a reproduction of the legitimating elements of the Stalinist experience. Thus, reference to the revolutionary credentials of the ruling élite served to reproduce the logic of the vanguard party within the national context. This also meant that within the ruling party itself, one could distinguish an 'aristocracy' which had been intimately involved in bringing about the revolution. In Trotsky's words, theirs was the 'primogeniture in the Revolution' (Fehér *et al.* 1983: 169). In the Romanian context this primogeniture enhanced the position of the 'native group' of Gheorghiu-Dej as they had lived in illegality in Romania during the war, whereas others, such as Ana Pauker, had been in Moscow.[199] The vanguard party can be seen as taking up a domestic project of modernisation by claiming its superior role in identifying such a project.[200] Related to the 'vanguard' position of the ruling élite was its superior knowledge of social-historical laws and interpretation of Marxism-Leninism. By claiming its absolute superiority in these fields, it could legitimate the totalitarian control of society.

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[199] The myth of a 'patriotic group' in the history of the Romanian Communist Party and its role in the coup d'état that overthrew Antonescu's military dictatorship formed an important part of the constitutive myth, and gave Gheorghiu-Dej a powerful argument in his struggle with contending élites (King 1980: 39-46).

[200] In the Marxist-Leninist ideology one finds a notion of urgency, as it perceived the class struggle as being in an acute phase and thus the necessity for immediate action was warranted (by a vanguard party/élite that understood this acuteness). The understanding of history in Marxism-Leninism - in the form of 'historical materialism' - emphasised the historical role of one class, the proletariat, in realising socialist society. As the proletariat was deemed not yet capable of representing its own interests (as it was indeed often almost non-existent in the East European societies), the party would (temporarily) replace it in the pursuit of the overall socialist project (which was ultimately considered a 'natural' end to history anyway). The tenet of the vanguard party in the Marxist-Leninist vision of the creation of a modern society had far-reaching consequences for the interpretation as a whole, as it perceived party sovereignty as a goal in itself (Fehér *et al.* 1983: 187), and as necessary the complete subordination of society to its will. This meant that party interference in any aspect of society - economic, political, social or cultural - was warranted from the point of view of the 'superior knowledge' the party possessed. This kind of 'social holism' provided legitimation for the reproduction of the ruling élite's power in communist societies, in certain contexts leading to autocracy as all visionary power was possessed by one person (in the case of Stalin or Ceauşescu), in others to more collective forms of rule.

A third mode of legitimation in the Communist project was negative legitimation,[201] i.e. highlighting the lack of legitimacy of prior existing regimes as well as current contenders. All communist parties were in this sense referring explicitly to their own anti-fascist credentials and their superior performance in terms of social equality and human emancipation, and ultimately the alleged transcendence of capitalism by the Communist project. A fourth mode of rejustifying the Soviet model in the domestic context was the invocation of traditional legitimation, i.e. showing the continuity of the Communist project with local ideas and practices. In Romania, this was particularly visible in the national Communist phase, when Ceauşescu likened his own person to other great persons from the past (for instance, Ştefan cel Mare (a unifier *avant-la-lettre* of the Romanian lands), or even 19th century Liberals such as Bălcescu), and also in the tendency for Romanian producers of culture to be reassessed by the Communists as socialist thinkers *avant-la-lettre*; Mihail Eminescu's allegedly socialist writings are a case in point. These various elements of domestic legitimation obviously had different meanings and weight through time and could be evoked simultaneously. For instance, whereas the notion of vanguard party was probably more important in the initial stages of communism (as a constitutive myth, see Arnason 1993), elements of traditional legitimacy and goal-rationality (both articulated by means of national symbols) came to the surface in later moments of crisis.

[201] I use the concept of negative legitimation in a sense similar to that of Fehér *et al.* (1983: 182), i.e. pointing out an alleged superiority of the socialist model. Ray's minimal concept of legitimacy (1996: 86) - which he in fact borrows from Fehér *et al.* - also refers to a negative conception of legitimacy, but in the sense of a passive acceptance of the regime by the population, which does not have recourse to any image of an alternative political order.

9.3 The strategic-institutional programme of national Communism

If the communist programme of modernisation was essentially an universalist and internationalist one, pre-empting specific local or national concerns, its main premises were eventually embedded in the local contexts in which its promissory creed was executed. The role national traditions played in indigenising communism should not be underestimated. The Romanian transition from Stalinism to national Communism is a case in point. The Romanian reaction to de-Stalinisation and reformist discourses reveal how in particular interwar definitions of the 'national specificity' and understandings of modernisation could re-emerge and be reactivated against what were perceived as tendencies of erosion of national autonomy. By means of the construction of a syncretic discourse consisting of communist ideology and radical particularist and nationalist traditions (I differ here from Verdery's view that communism was completely subsumed under a nationalist course, Verdery 1991), the Romanian Communists created a highly specific national project, in which the continuation of a programme based on a 'quantity-driven' economic project and the centralisation and dedifferentiation of political authority was pursued in name of the particular good of the nation and its essential values.[202]

Cognitive prescriptions

1. Societal progress. In the phase of emulation, Romanian Communism was fully committed to rapid and comprehensive industrialisation. The priority of its model of modernisation was the complete transformation of the dominantly rural economy into an industrialised, urbanised economy. Its particular (Stalinist) model of modernisation prescribed that small producers were to be replaced by large-scale agricultural collectives and state farms and industrial production was to be organised in extensive industrial complexes (cf. RCP 1975: 118; 120-24). This was not merely a strategy of 'catching-up' with the West by means of an organised offensive of centrally led economic modernisation, but entailed a reading of societal progress as an ever closer rapprochement to the ideal of a communist society. The latter was not merely

[202] Rather than being the 'vanguard of the proletariat' the party embodied the 'vital center of the nation'.

understood as a society in which economic scarcity (and thus the social question) was abolished; its concomitant effects were at least as significant. The complete harmony of society was counterposed to the class conflict and exploitation of the subordinated classes in capitalist societies. Perhaps more importantly, the revolution was deemed to result in the creation of a 'new man', which was qualitatively different from the egoistic, bourgeois man of capitalist society. In most aspects, the communist revolution constituted a discontinuation of capitalist society and an alleged transcendence of its major complications. This utopian vision of future society was based on a 'social scientific' reading of history, which made it possible to identify the general laws of societal change and therefore the 'conscious regulation *ex ante* of all economic processes' (Walicki 1995: 452). In this way, the anarchy of the capitalist market economy could be overcome by the full rational control of society and the possibility of carefully planning a perfect society came within grasp of humanity.

In the subsequent phase of national Communism, societal progress was not merely read as the abolishment of material scarcity, the elimination of social antagonism, and the eradication of bourgeois values; these priorities were now understood within the context of national independence and self-rule. Societal progress was not only read as the ever increasing rational control over the forces of nature and society, but also as the increasing autonomy and self-rule of the (Romanian) nation: 'Life demonstrates that socialism is the most advanced social order known to mankind, capable of assuring to any people full social and national liberation, the edification of a free future, according to a people's own aspirations' (RCP 1975: 90). The nation was now equated with 'a strong factor of progress and civilization in the world' (Ceauşescu 1973a: 73).

2. Collective self-determination. The most decisive rupture resulting from the communist 'revolution from without' was the apparent abandonment of any project of national autonomy. As the reconstruction of society was exclusively based on a conception of 'proletarian internationalism' and subordination to the demands and needs of the Soviet Union, one could not speak of any modernisation in the sense it is used in this study, i.e., as a project to reconstruct society in such a way as to achieve *local* self-rule in one form or the other. Not only was the societal transformation based on a fully extraneous model, the Stalinist one, the political project was also instigated on the explicit premises of allegiance to a project with supranational aspirations. Nevertheless,

one needs to go beyond these explicit features of the Communist project in Romania to reveal a different, latent manifestation of autonomy. Some drive for autonomy was immanent in the project of 'socialism in one country' and the absolute priority for national industrialisation.[203] By emphasising the necessity of building communism first in the national context, the interpretive space was created for a later re-assertion of local, collective self-rule. Gheorghiu-Dej's drive for industrialisation could be seen as a composite of two aspirations: on the one hand, to strictly implement the Stalinist line dictated by Moscow, and on the other, to achieve what Jowitt calls a 'break-through', i.e., the 'decisive alteration or destruction of values, structures and behaviors which are perceived by a revolutionary élite as comprising or contributing to the actual or potential existence of alternative centers of political power' (Jowitt 1971: 7). The latter clearly has primarily domestic implications.

The eventual transformation of Romanian Communism into an explicitly national(-ist) project was, however, by no means completely pre-determined. Only through the coming together of relatively contingent events and enduring tendencies (such as the demands for supranational division of labour, the Sino-Soviet split, and the perseverance of the Romanian élite) could the explicit commitment to a national project emerge. The national line initiated by Gheorghiu-Dej entailed the explicit demand for local self-rule, expressed in the call for 'non-interference' and the right to national self-determination. In essence, the independent line of Gheorghiu-Dej consisted of the aspiration to persist in a national Stalinist line, without giving in to either trends of de-Stalinisation or supranational division of labour. To defend this policy, Gheorghiu-Dej invoked the right to national self-determination of the socialist states, the complete sovereignty of national communist parties, and condemned the right of interference in national matters of any supranational entity (Schöpflin 1974: 80). Collective self-rule was thus interpreted as the local authority to set one's own rules, independent of the course of other states. Self-rule was to be guaranteed by a form of 'constitutional

[203] This is not to say that one should read history in a teleological way (as is strongly denounced by Shafir, 1985), and conclude that the early Communist project necessarily had to evolve into a distinct nationalist project. My argument here is that despite of the internationalist character of early communism in Romania, an implicit assumption of local autonomy was contained in 'socialism in one country' and could therefore emerge in particular circumstances.

independence', i.e., the strict compliance of the socialist states to international norms of national sovereignty.

Gheorghiu-Dej interpreted the nation primarily as a context for industrialisation and the realisation of a communist society (the nation as a 'vehicle of progress'). Ceauşescu's national Communism (or *Ceauşism*) comprised more than only a claim for national independence, in the sense that nationalism became an integral part of the socialist project. Thus the nation was not only the pre-text for the 'communisation' of society, but was converted into an explicit objective of the project of modernisation. Whereas under Gheorghiu-Dej the official line was 'national in form, socialist in content', under Ceauşescu it became 'socialist in form, nationalist in content' (Schöpflin 1974: 93). The defence and the thriving of particular national values became the primary objective of the search for national self-determination. Although society was mobilised around the objective of industrialisation, the ultimate end was the emancipation of the nation. Not only the independence of the nation was claimed, but the nation was also fully reconciled with the socialist project, which was deemed a superior way of emancipating the nation:

> ... the party considers it necessary that new relations between nations and states will be established, relations based on the full equality of rights, on full reciprocal respect for independence, on the right of every people to develop according to its own will (RCP 1975: 172).

> ... the role of the nation in history is not yet finished. Rather, practical reality shows clearly that the nation and the national state are destined to have, still for a long period of time, a role of primary importance in society... communists, revolutionaries and progressive forces have the obligation to combat adequately for the consolidation of the nation, of the national states that declare themselves in favour of a free and independent development (RCP 1975: 173).

> Socialism continues the development of the nation started in the bourgeois epoch and creates the conditions for the full realisation of the people's national life. The socialist revolution and the construction of a new societal order free the creativity of the people from its chains and open up an epoch of national awaking in the life of every country, [as well as] the powerful manifestation of patriotic sentiments among the masses (Ceauşescu 1971 [1966]: 27).

The syncretism of Marxism-Leninism and nationalism found its clearest expression when the Ceauşescu-regime formed a discursive coalition with a group of radical nationalist intellectuals. This group of so-called 'proto-chronists' or 'nationalist

dogmatists' had accepted Ceauşescu's guided liberalisation of 1971 mostly because of its 'nationalistic overtones' (Shafir 1983: 418), and promoted a vision of Romanian culture that was to have significant implications outside of the field of culture. The proto-chronist vision basically postulated the anticipation in Romanian culture of major developments in the more recognised Western European cultures, claiming a variety of innovations and discoveries in the cultural field.[204] Although proto-chronism started out as a literary doctrine, its main tenets had strong political implications, not only because of the closeness to political power of some of its protagonists, but more importantly because of the affinity of its arguments with Ceauşescu's course of isolationist nationalism. The proto-chronist doctrine included a renewed attention for 'national specificity' and the 'national essence', and the organic development of Romanian culture which was to be protected from harmful external influences. The domination of Western culture was rejected in favour of the local creation of culture; Romanian culture was perceived as self-sufficient, having the potential of being created on the basis of self-generated values (Martin 2002b). The proto-chronist model for cultural autarchy had a strong affinity with Ceauşescu's search for economic and political autarchy. At the same time, important tenets of the interwar radical nationalist and fascist discourse were re-articulated, be it in a different context and without necessarily re-activating all of its elements (cf. Verdery 1991: 168). Proto-chronism stressed, as interwar fascism, the necessity of preserving essential values of the Romanian nation, although mysticism and religion were largely absent. Essential values were often identified with popular and rural culture. Additionally, the autonomous development of Romanian culture, safeguarded against the nefarious influences from both the Western and Soviet sides, was a principal argument. Proto-chronism further implied some sort of cultural revolution, in which cultural, ideological purity and authenticity were asserted against importation, but which in itself also 'upgraded' the importance of culture in wider society.[205] Finally, proto-chronism shared with fascism its preoccupation with the 'organic' continuity of Romanian culture and the concern with prior achievements of 'heroic' Romanians.

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[204] See for the emergence and spread of the theory: Gabanyi 2000; Martin 2002a-c; Verdery 1991.

[205] As one of the major participants in protochronism stated: 'Can one speak of real independence if a nation is prevented... from exercising its right to culture?' (cited in: Verdery 1991: 178).

3. Political representation and control. The Communist project in Romania aimed at the realisation of two primary objectives: first of all (and from the very beginning of its implementation), the construction of a socialist society; and, secondly, the realisation of national independence and autonomy. The transformation of rural, bourgeois society into an independent socialist nation was held possible through the institutionalisation of mainly three organisational innovations: a: the creation of a vanguard party; b. the ensurance of the participation of the people; and, c. the vertical hierarchisation of society.

The creation of 'a party of a new type' or vanguard party was the most significant practical innovation in Marxism-Leninism. Formally, the vanguard party constituted the expression of the rule of the working class (the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'), and its institution was seen as a historical necessity in the transitory phase of the construction of socialist society. At the same time, it embodied a radical organisational innovation as it concentrated all political authority in a small political unit, and it congregated all knowledge in this unit, making the vanguard the only possible source of knowledge of society and thus the only issuer of directives for social change. The totalistic interpretation of the working class as the 'most revolutionary force in society' and of the party-state as its direct representation meant that the representation of any other political force[206], and any form of contestation was denied.[207] In addition, as the party was both one with the people (and could thus express the people's unified will)[208] and at the same time was its guiding force, its penetration of societal spheres knew no limits.

The Communist party's guiding role comprised therefore not only the 'normal' sphere of politics, regarding the co-ordination and direction of society, but also the unlimited mobilisation of society for the objective of economic development as well as the subordination of all cultural production to its political objectives; the party was 'the co-

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[206] The working class was often depicted as in alliance with the peasantry and the intellectuals (see, for instance, RCP 1975: 112), which meant that their interests were seen as completely coinciding with those of the working class.

[207] In ideological terms, this was stated by the RCP in 1969 as follows: 'There can be no field in theoretical thought or in the activity of the propagation of ideas, in which the presence of the party does not appear explicitly' (RCP 1971 [1969]: 83).

[208] As Arnason remarks: 'the definition of the party as the only authentic representative of the people relativizes the principle of popular sovereignty without openly rejecting it' (1993: 106).

ordinating centre of all the sectors of economic and social life' (RCP 1975: 156). The primary task of the party vis-à-vis society was the augmentation of the socialist consciousness of the masses and the complete mobilisation of the latter for the construction of socialist society. In the transitory phase, the directing role of the party necessarily had to increase to ultimately bring about the complete fusion of the members of the party with the masses, by bringing the masses up to the level of consciousness and social responsibility of the party (RCP 1975: 153). In this, the role of the party could be expanded indefinitely, as the phase of the 'edification of socialist society' never found a definite end-state (as affirmed by the launch of a new and allegedly superior phase of socialist development in the early 1970s, the construction of a 'multilaterally developed socialist society'). Participation of party members in the political project of Communism was therefore confined to 'acting tirelessly for the application of party policy in all sectors of activity', so as to guarantee 'a unitary direction and a full political-organisational unity in the ranks of the party' (RCP 1975: 156, 155).

The receiving end of the party guidelines – society – was perceived as the subject of societal transformation, rather than as an active participant. The relation between the party and society was based on the socialisation, re-education, and mobilisation of the population, justified by the party's superior knowledge of the 'objective necessities' of the population. Traditional values in the form of rural and bourgeois mind-sets were to be replaced by socialist values. The unlearning of old behavioral patterns and the acquisition of new mind-sets signified the internalisation of the socialist culture as promulgated by the party and transmitted by 'organic intellectuals' and party members on various levels. The internalisation of socialist culture should result in the creation of new men, who had a higher level of consciousness and who were dedicated completely to the cause, hard work, and had a collectivist and patriotic outlook[209] (Gilberg 1981:

[209] The socialist ethical principles included: 'a) All the workers will have to be convinced that their strict obligation is to dedicate all their energy, capacity and ability to the great work of edification of multilaterally developed socialist society and communism in Romania... [some lines below, pb] c) The supreme obligation of any member of society is to defend at any cost and with whatever sacrifice the integrity of the fatherland, the revolutionary conquests of the people, [and] the independence and sovereignty of Romania'... [some lines below, pb] h) The party continuously

150). Political participation has been defined as the 'greatest possible degree of mobilization of all human and material resources for the quickest and most thorough way of implementing historical necessity' (Gilberg 1981: 149). Political representation and participation were interpreted as only possible through the complete subordination to and confirmation of the centrally identified 'objective necessities' by the citizen. Thus, the active participation of the population in self-rule and the sensation of every citizen that he is 'master of his own destiny, able to think and act freely for the benefit of the progress of society' (Ceauşescu 1969: 83) necessarily took the form of the confirmation of the party's programme.[210]

In organisational terms, the party-state as the singular guiding force of the objective, rational necessity of industrialisation, collectivisation, and cultural transformation found its institutional expression in what has been called a 'mono-organisational' structure. The continuous affirmation of the party as the 'only political force capable of guiding the people on the road to socialism and communism' and the subordination of 'all organisms and political and social institutions' (Ceauşescu 1969: 89) was translated into an institutional structure in which the party formed the centre and the top of the organisational system. The strictly hierarchical and pyramid-type of organisation of the Romanian Communist state has been likened to a form of corporatism, i.e., in the interwar, fascist understanding of the concept (Chirot 1978a: 492). This comparison seems to hold true when read in a particular way, i.e., as an expression of the vertical organisation of Romanian communist society, in which the party-state apparatus centrally directed and co-ordinated society, whereas horizontal links between societal actors were - at least formally - eliminated (cf. Chirot 1978a: 493-4).[211] Institutional innovations, such as the 'multilaterally developed socialist society', the blending of

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promotes the struggle against individualism and petite bourgeois egoism, against the tendencies of the subordination of the general interest of society to narrow private interests... (RCP 1975: 183-4).

[210] As Shafir (1985) argues, the 'political innovation' that took place during the early years of Ceauşescu's rule, i.e., the increased references to the possibility of political expression through debate over party policy and participation through political institutions, largely entailed a form of 'simulated change'. Rather than stimulating the production of pluralist views of social change, the confirmation of consensus over the party line was sought (Shafir 1985: 53-4).

[211] Chirot further argues that the various organisations that made up the whole of the communist state had specific functional qualities in an organically conceived national structure.

party and state functions, and the increased emphasis on participatory democracy reconfirmed rather than undermined the central position of the Communist party (King 1980, chapter 5).

Part 4 The post-communist experience

10. Romania after communism: which new project of modernisation?

10.1 Post-communism in Romania

The end of the 1980s saw widespread political upheavals in the communist world, which eventually led to the disintegration of the Soviet empire. Although Romania participated only towards the end of the wave of revolutions, its own violent revolution - with its call for autonomy and freedom - appeared to be grounded in the revolutionary vocabulary as much as anywhere else in the region. Simultaneously, the post-revolutionary developments indicated a perseverance of distinct historical legacies. These legacies (of a communist as well as pre-communist kind) conditioned the present to a significant extent. Continuity was discernible in political terms (the continuation in power of those belonging to the higher echelons of the Communist Party), in institutional terms (centralised and unitary state structures), in economic terms (the legacy and preservation of nationalised, large state enterprises), and in particular in terms of the interpretive horizons of the leading élites (who re-activated discourses of paternalism, particularism, and 'nationalising nationalism'). This last point is important, as the various interpretive horizons or perceptive frameworks that inform significant political élites in their actions ultimately constitute the overall structure within which potential directions of social change are defined.

The conceptions of modernisation of the most significant actors of the post-communist transformation were conditioned by locally produced discursive legacies and, ultimately, by the specific genesis of modernity in Romania.[212] As I have shown in the historical-empirical analysis of Romanian projects of modernisation, the 'original' project of modernisation in Romania – national Liberalism – not only institutionalised a discourse of emulationism and Westernism, but also evoked a strong counter-reaction in

[212] Understanding the past as conditioning the present does not signify a deterministic reading of the impact of historical legacies on the present, though. Rather, for the past to become an effective legacy, it needs to be actively recreated or 'transmitted' in the present by political and cultural agents (Kubik 2003).

the form of traditionalism or particularism. In this sense, we can speak of a legacy of two dominant discursive traditions of understanding modernity in Romania. This dual legacy is situated on the structural level in that both discursive traditions have remained the primary local sources for modernising discourses.

Legacies on a historical-institutional level are the ones produced in the different projects of modernisation undertaken in the last two centuries. The political élites that instigated these projects all referred to the dominant discursive traditions, reproducing some of their main tenets, but also combined these discourses with transnationally discursive paradigms, the outcome of which informed their behaviour in specific historical circumstances. The national Liberal project institutionalised a form of particularist universalism, which comprised both the emulation of the West and a collectivist, ethno-cultural understanding of the nation. Further, the national Liberal élites designated the state as the main protagonist of the project of modernisation. The Fascist counter-project introduced a form of radical particularism as it strongly criticised the Liberal project for its emulationism, while promulgating a strongly particularist understanding of Romanian uniqueness. At the same time, though, it re-produced the national Liberal emphasis on the emancipation of the ethno-cultural nation, be it on a cultural level. In addition, the Fascists reiterated the statist tendency introduced by the national Liberals, although the Fascist conception entailed a qualitative turn in its promotion of a 'total state'. The national Communist project of Ceauşescu reproduced part of the fascist tradition, as it promulgated a form of particularist universalism, in which the main tenets of Marxism-Leninism formed a syncretic discourse with a radically particularist nationalism. This discourse not only reproduced the collectivist, ethno-cultural understanding of the nation, but also introduced a 'social rationality' (Bauman 2001b: 263), which was based on social solidarity and equality. The national Communist 'patronage' state re-emphasised the statist tendency in Romanian modernity, in which the party-state was perceived as the principle agent of modernisation as well as the identifier of the 'objective necessities' of society.

The political projects in the post-communist period have been significantly conditioned by both the structural and historical-institutional legacies.[213] At the same time, post-1989 discourses of modernisation have been susceptible to external discourses. As the break-down of the communist regimes also signified the breakdown of an artificial societal disconnection from the West, the post-communist countries are nowadays again exposed to transnationally dominant discourses which can potentially be adopted and integrated into local discourses. This in turn means that the potential of recreation of particularist discourses is threatened by exogenous universalist discourses. However, the exact meaning of the external discourses in local contexts can only be fully understood by looking at the intercourse of these two types of discourses in the local political field.

The transformation process in Eastern Europe has been dominated by two transnationally dominant discourses, on the one hand, the neoliberal paradigm in politics, economics, and the social sciences (see Bönker *et al.* 2002), and, on the other, the discourse of a 'return to Europe' or European integration, which comprises an economic element (which overlaps with elements of neoliberalism, but also containing a higher awareness of social solidarity), and a political element, consisting of a strong commitment to civil and political rights. Perhaps most importantly, European integration touches upon the complex but elementary questions of national identity, national culture and collective self-determination, so crucial for the 'liberated' post-communist societies. For Romania, as for the other countries in the region, the collapse of the communist project meant that political élites and other social actors had to confront anew the questions of the construction of the polity, of socio-political practices, and of national and cultural identity (cf. Jowitt 1992: 285).

10.2 Political conflict over transformation

The Ceauşescu regime indirectly collapsed as a result of the diminishing grip of the Soviet Union on its East European empire. As the threat of Soviet intervention faded

[213] As, for instance, noted by Shafir, an exclusionary, ethnic logic has been prominent during the Romanian modern experience and continued to be so during the post-communist period (Shafir 2001: 91; see also Gallagher 2001).

away, domestic reformist élites as well as dissidents could voice their opinions with fewer restraint. In contrast, in Romania Ceauşescu maintained his firm grip on society until the end but could not prevent local anti-regime movements (that already existed in an unorganised form) from rising to the surface. The revolution that was fully unleashed between 16 and 22 December 1989 combined spontaneous social movements from below[214], and political action from particular factions in the Communist Party, thus from above. In the disorder and confusion of the revolution, in which significant roles were played by the army and the Securitate, which emerged in support of the population, the so-called National Salvation Front (NSF)[215] was eventually able to seize power.[216] The Front comprised a wide range of social actors, most importantly members of the Communist nomenklatura, but also a number of anti-regime dissidents.

The initial mobilisation of reform-minded and revolutionary forces in the Front fragmented rapidly as the latter was criticised both for the manner in which it seized power and its general non-democratic behaviour. This led to a political polarisation of pro- and anti-Front forces and resulted in the domination of immediate post-revolutionary politics by conflicts over transformation. Although in very broad terms one could speak of a political consensus on the 'restoration of democracy, liberties, and dignity of the Romanian people' (as stated in the declaration issued by the NSF on 22 December 1989, see Iliescu 1995a: 19), because of later deviations by actors from these objectives and different interpretations of what key concepts such as democracy and a market economy actually mean, the immediate post-revolutionary period was dominated by conflict over the definition and direction of reforms. Conflict occurred over the pace of reforms (should they be gradual or rapid?), their meaning and function (what was to be achieved and why?), their scope (which institutions and fields of social life were to

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[214] In particular the Hungarian minority was prominent in protesting against the Ceauşescu regime. The December revolution started in Timişoara, a city in western Romania, and was triggered by the imminent expulsion of the Hungarian pastor Tökés from his parish. From Timişoara the revolution diffused to other cities, to reach eventually Bucharest, where it culminated in the flight of the Ceauşescus from the communist party building.

[215] In the text and in figure 2 I refer to the political parties in their English names; note that references can contain Romanian names.

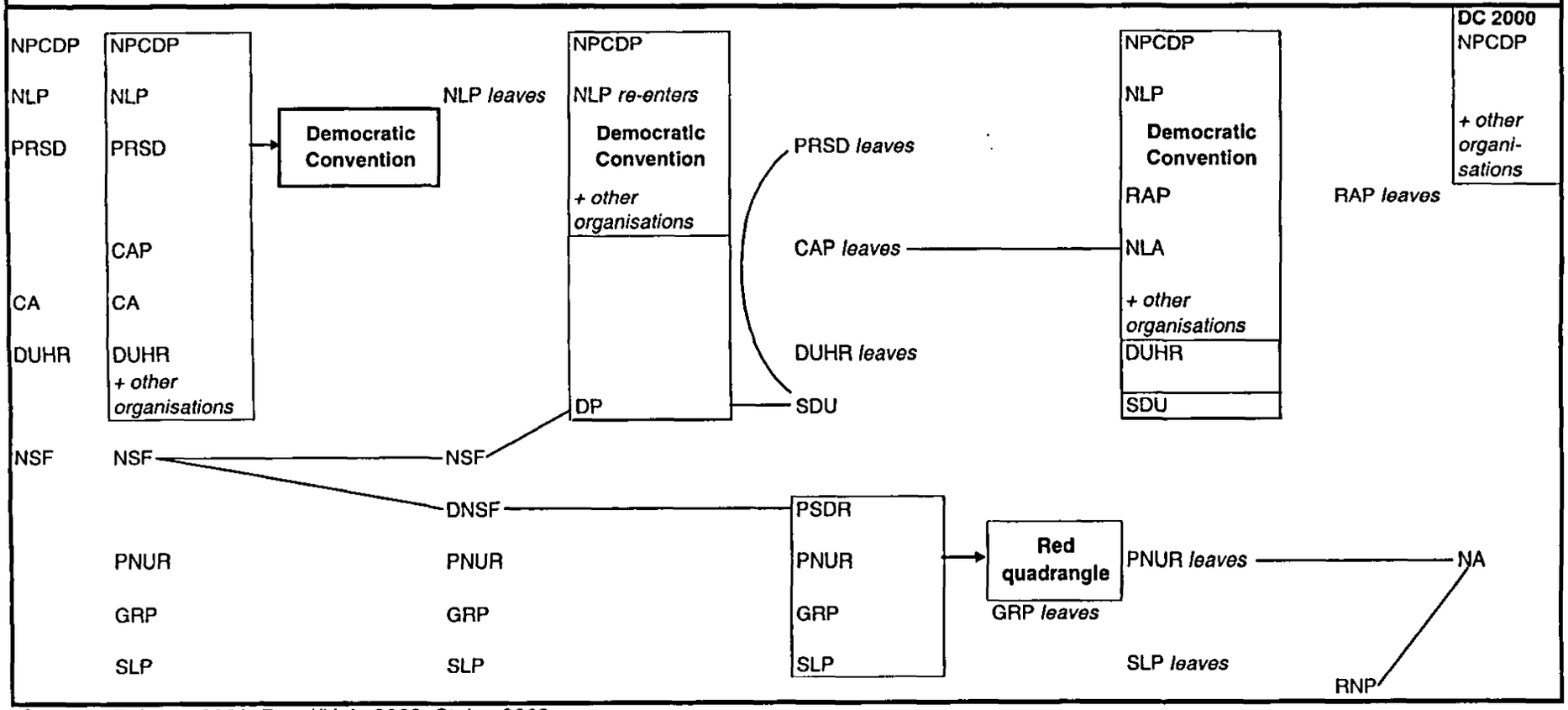
[216] For a detailed account of the revolutionary events, as well as the various myths that surround it, see Gabanyi 1998, Neumann 2000: 63-87.

be included?), and which societal model, which national and cultural identities were desirable?

At least a part of the revolution had been about a critique of the communist system as such, i.e. a denial of the party's self-proclaimed monopoly on the truth, a condemnation of the complete subordination of the individual to the system and its needs (which was especially true in Romania), and a renunciation of the ways in which material means and wealth were distributed. If events after the revolution indicated that the new ruling party showed an inclination towards redirecting systemic critique to a limited critique of the Ceauşescu regime, the fact that the revolutionary events had for to a crucial extent been the outcome of political action 'from below' meant that the new rulers were vulnerable to the criticism of betrayal of the ideals of the revolution. In addition, the politically hegemonic NSF itself articulated the need for 'a system of pluralist democratic government', 'the elimination of ideological dogma's', and 'respect for full human rights and liberty' (Declaration of the NSF, 22 December 1989, in: Iliescu 1995a: 19-22)[217]. Critique of the communist system re-opened the questions of national identity and belonging, and territorial issues as well as social questions. In other words, it re-opened the questions of what would hold the community together (if not class unity or national homogeneity), and how social solidarity should be perceived and realised. Here the international context becomes significant, as the fall of the communist regimes was generally interpreted as a failure of communism as such, and solutions to the above-mentioned problématiques were articulated in a liberal form: a democratic state (based on a social contract between citizen and state), an individualist notion of freedom, and market-based solidarity (this is true for both neoliberalism and the overall direction of European integration at the beginning of the 1990s). This

[217] In the same communication one could also detect articulations in the opposite direction. It stipulated that the NSF had entirely taken over the means of state authority and had subordinated its institutions to the NSF. These statements could be read as a negation of other sources of political power in society (see also Iliescu 1995*b*).

Figure 2 Major political parties and coalitions in Romania (1990-2000)



Sources: Baleanu 2001; Pavel/Huiu 2003; Stoica 2002

NPCDP	National Peasant and Christian Democratic Party
NLP	National Liberal Party
PRSD	Party of Romanian Social Democracy
DUHR	Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania
CA	Civic Alliance
CAP	Civic Alliance Party
NLA	National Liberal Alliance
RAP	Romanian Alternative Party
DP	Democratic Party
SDU	Social Democratic Union
DC2000	Democratic Convention 2000

NSF	National Salvation Front
DNSF	Democratic National Salvation Front
PSDR	Party of Social Democracy in Romania
PNUR	Party of National Union of Romania
GRP	Greater Romania Party
SLP	Socialist Labour Party
RNP	Romanian National Party
NA	National Alliance

interpretation was by and large adopted by pro-Western social organisations and political parties in Romania, and as such became part of the conflict over transformation.

By and large, the political scene in post-communist Romania was dominated by three ideological formations, each of which articulated a different vision of post-communist transformation.[218] Perhaps the most dominant actor in post-1989 politics was a formation of post-communists, which initially merely sought continuity with the past (as far as seemed possible under the circumstances of the post-communist context). However, in its confrontation with the responsibilities of government and an increasingly outspoken opposition, it selectively incorporated elements of gradual reform in its discourse and political action (pursuing economic reforms as well as integration in European and international structures), and moved to the direction of what one could call a social-democratic vision of political and economic transformation. I label the post-communist discourse as a discourse of limited change (see chapter 11). Secondly, a formation or coalition of traditional and newly formed political parties, which had as its common denominator a dedication to bring about a significant rupture with the communist past. This anti-communist coalition perceived as a general model of transformation a Western-type of democracy and market economy, complemented with an emphasis on the stimulation of a civil society (see chapter 11). Anti-communism and a general consensus on the ultimate goals of transformation could not however conceal significant ideological differences between the constituent parties. I label the overall discourse of the coalition as a discourse of radical change (see chapter 11). Thirdly, a less numerous but significant third formation of political parties were those on the extreme left and right, parties that strongly emphasised the need for continuity with the

[218] Various Romanian analysts have estimated the role of ideologies and political discourses as relatively insignificant in understanding contemporary events, as the available discourses are seen as either incoherent and/or relatively similar to one another, and the struggle for political power as ultimately decisive (Barbu 1999; Pasti 1997; Pasti *et al.*1996). Whereas the fact that the power struggle is an immanent factor of Romanian political life can hardly be denied, I contend that the actual direction and the parameters of political action cannot be understood without reference to the symbols and discourses used.

communist past, and promoted an exclusivist nationalism, in favour of the Romanian ethnic majority and against the loss of sovereignty and identity that was perceived as being part and parcel of integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. Moreover, these parties shared a common scepticism regarding democratic procedures and pluralism. The discursive coalition of the extremist parties with the post-communists between 1993-1996 warrants a classification of its ideological position as among discourses of limited change, although at the extremes of this category, that is to say, as hardly promoting any change at all.

The perceptions prevalent in any of these formations were susceptible not only to a dominant international discourse of neoliberalism in economic policy-making but also (and increasingly so) to the overlapping but also distinct discourse of European integration and the idea of a 'return to Europe' in a much broader sense. Additionally, these formations reacted to the others' adoption and incorporation of certain concepts and ideas. Below, I will first analyse the crystallisation of the major political actors in post-1989 Romania, and subsequently the emerging political and economic institutional patterns. Chapter 11 contains an analysis of the discourses of limited and radical change.

The post-communists. The so-called National Salvation Front that emerged as the 'caretaker' government from the December revolution consisted predominantly of members of the Communist nomenklatura, from the second level of the state bureaucracy that had not been part of the inner circle of Ceauşescu's ruling élite.[219] In addition, many former dissidents had joined the Front (such as Mircea Dinescu, Ana Blandiana, and Doinea Cornea, who had been highly critical of the Ceauşescu regime; see Blendea 1994). The Front attempted to legitimate its ruling position predominantly by claiming to have played a key role in the revolution, being essentially its 'emanation'. In addition, the Front presented itself as a 'mass movement', which was perceived as a superior organisation to that of a normal political party, as it embodied national

[219] The most prominent post-communists included Ion Iliescu, who had been a prominent member of the Communist party until 1971, and Silviu Brucan, another high-placed member of the Communist Party, and ex-ambassador to the United States and United Nations (Tismăneanu 1997: 415).

consensus (Tudor and Gavrilescu 2002: 96). The opposition qualified the post-communist vision and practice as that of a new 'single ruling party'. Additionally, the NSF sought to justify its position by taking measures in early 1990 that could be interpreted as populist, such as the restitution of land and the cancellation of detested measures made by Ceauşescu (the latter included the export of agricultural produce and restrictive policies on the usage of lighting and heating; see the NSF's statement of 22 December 1989, Iliescu 1995a: 19-22; Gabanyi 1998: 137). In its television statement addressed to the nation, the NSF declared the removal of power from the Ceauşescu regime, to dissolution of the old regime's power structures, to dismissal of the government of the State Council and its institutions, and at the same time, that all state powers had been assumed by the Council of the National Salvation Front (Iliescu 1995a: 17-23).

The NSF was the major victor in the May 1990 general elections obtaining 66 percent of the votes. The only opposition party that managed to obtain a relatively significant amount of votes (7 %) was the party of the Hungarian minority. By winning the general elections so convincingly, the NSF could now further justify its ruling position by pointing to its democratic credentials. Within the NSF, however, different opinions regarding the meaning of democracy and reform, in other words, about the process of transformation as such, became increasingly obvious during 1990. President Iliescu represented a conservative[220] faction, which advocated the idea of an 'original democracy', meaning the incorporation of all political forces in the NSF which in practice would be an updated version of the former single ruling party (Blendea 1994: 6), as well as 'social security', which indicated its adherence to gradual reforms with low social costs[221] (see Pasti 1997: 215, 225). A progressive faction around prime minister Petre Roman represented an ideological current, which advocated more rapid

[220] The labels 'conservative' and 'progressive' are used here as indicating a position towards social change, rather than as a reference to a political doctrine.

[221] It further indicates that responsibility for social solidarity as well as its substance were placed on the level of the state, or in other words, as coming from above, whereas society was predominantly conceived as a receptor, not as an active contributor.

(economic) reforms as well as the establishment of a more 'authentic' democracy.[222] This conflict between conservative and reformist factions dominated the political scene from 1990 until early 1992.[223]

The outcome of the general elections of September 1992 changed the political landscape, as a minority government was formed by Iliescu's DNSF, the opposition of the DC gained a much larger representation in the parliament, and the role of Roman's NSF became much less influential. In addition, the minority government of the DNSF (the former conservative faction of the NSF) chose to rely on the parliamentary support of three parties from the extreme right and left (the Greater Romania Party (GRP), the Party of National Union of Romania (PNUR) and the Socialist Labour Party (SLP)), all three being reactionary parties set up by important former Communists, promoting continuity with the past and exclusivist nationalism.

The PNUR was established in 1990, as a direct reaction against the political organisation of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania, where in some counties the population contains a significant Hungarian minority. The priority around which the PNUR was formed was the defence of Romanian national interest, especially in its political basis Transylvania, where national sovereignty was perceived as being infringed by (particularly Hungarian) minorities (Gallagher 1997: 31). By promoting the ethnic unity of Romanians against political fragmentation, the PNUR rejected the pluralism of democratic systems and its promotion of the national interest formed a

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[222] That at that moment there was still no consensus whatsoever on the major issues of the transformation was indicated by this 'return to the problems specific of 1990', that is to say, the definition of political democracy (Pasti 1997: 228).

[223] Two events eventually settled the conflict. Prime minister Roman resigned in September 1991, an event directly triggered by one of the numerous *mineriadă*, the marching on Bucharest of a group of miners from the mining area of the Jiu Valley. The miners protested against Roman's reforms, whereas in the immediate past these *mineriadă* had been deployed against civil opposition to the NSF. Roman was replaced by the economist and technocrat Theodor Stolojan Secondly, during the National Convention of the NSF in March 1992, Roman's reform proposals were accepted (which, amongst others, contained the condemnation of any restoration of communist rule) and Roman was elected president of the party, which led to the departure of the Iliescu faction from the NSF and the establishment of Iliescu's own political party, the Democratic National Salvation Front (see Ionescu 1992a, 1992b).

direct continuity with the exclusivist nationalism that one element of the syncretic discourse of national Communism (Gallagher 1995: 196, 198-9).

The Greater Romania Party, primarily based in the provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia, was founded by two prominent members of the 'proto-chronists' under Ceauşescu, Corneliu Vadim Tudor and Eugen Barbu (see chapter 6). The party rapidly gathered forces that were in one way or another linked to the former regime, for instance, ex-Security officers and members of the military. The GRP's message was essentially similar to the PNUR's, i.e. the promotion of the national majority against minorities (against Hungarians but also expressed in anti-semitism), opposition to interference by external forces in domestic matters, and a highly critical stance toward democratic procedures and pluralism. The third party in the coalition, the Socialist Labour Party, was set up by a group of former Communists and constituted the direct descendant of the dissolved RCP. Although initially it explicitly associated itself with the old regime, it later shed references to, for instance, people's ownership of the means of production and the depiction of capitalism as a main enemy (Pasti 1997: 230).

The DNSF programme of a 'social market economy', social solidarity, slow reforms, and a strong, central state, together indicated a rather conservative stance towards political reforms, a preference for gradual and restricted economic reforms, and a rejection of foreign models, were underwritten and complemented by the strongly anti-Western, exclusivist, anti-reform and pro-continuity outlook of the extremist parties (cf. Ionescu 1992c: 38-42; Neumann 1993; Pasti 1997: 221-38). The informal co-operation between the minority government and the extremist parties was formalised in 1994, which led to the inclusion of members of the PNUR in the government. In early 1995, the three parties and the government signed the so-called Four-Party Pact, giving all three parties access to government positions (Veiga 1997: 55).

During 1995-1996 the coalition fell apart as Iliescu's burgeoning strategy of Euro-Atlantic integration (including reconciliation with Hungary on the question of the Hungarian minority) could not meet the approval of the extremist parties. The first party to leave the coalition was the GRP, in general because of its disagreement with the increasingly pro-Western course of the Party of Social Democracy in Romania (PSDR) (the new name of the DNSF, adopted in 1995), and directly because of its disapproval of Iliescu's proposal of a Hungarian-Romanian Treaty on the ethnic Hungarian minority

in Romania (Gabanyi 1998: 286; Roper 2000: 77-8). In the following year both the SLP and the PNUR left the coalition, the latter because of its fundamental opposition to the basic treaty with Hungary and, more generally, because of its continuous criticism of the Social-Democrats. By actively dissolving the coalition, the PSDR apparently sought to present itself as a moderate and social-democratic party (Shafir 1996*a*).

The anti-communist opposition. The opposition parties gathered in the Democratic Convention, which united self-proclaimed democratic and anti-communist forces against the ruling party and the extremists, became increasingly influential in Romanian politics. The coalition played only a minor political role in the period between the December revolution and the general elections of September 1992, when those forces that had been instrumental in the execution of the Ceauşescus (the NSF) managed to transform their revolutionary credentials into political power, thereby creating continuity with the Communist regime, and practically dominating the government and the parliament, as well as the security services, the judiciary, and the mass-media (Pavel 1992: 6). Only with the local and general elections of 1992 did the DC manage to institutionalise its position as democratic opposition and to criticise from an intra-institutional position the immobility and central position of the NSF. The coalition was born from the realisation that only if united could the opposition counter the post-totalitarian tendencies - in the sense of being its suspension between democracy and totalitarianism - of the governing party (Pavel 1992: 6). Initially, the coalition consisted of the three 'historical parties', the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (DUHR), which represented the Hungarian minority, and the Civic Alliance Party (CAP), which was primarily made up of democratically-minded intellectuals.[224] The coalition enlarged to comprise many other parties, including an ecologist party and various civic organisations, giving expression not only to the struggle for democracy but also to the consolidation of civil society (Pavel 1992: 6).

The anti-communist opposition in reality took a position similar to the dissident forces that in some other East-European countries (notably Poland, Czechoslovakia, and

[224] The Civic Alliance Party formed the political extension of various civic organisations that had been formed after 1989, such as the Group for Social Dialogue and the Civic Alliance, organisations that themselves were intentionally non-political.

Hungary) formed the counterpart of reform-minded communists in regime change (though the NSF was hardly regarded as a partner with whom to negotiate). As Romania under Ceauşescu had known very little organised resistance to the Communist regime and therefore knew no institutionalised critique of communism, critique after 1989 had to come from the newly emerging political actors. Partially as an outcome of their late emergence, the 'historical parties' - the Liberals, the peasantists, and the socialists - which tried to fill the 'democratic gap' lacked the legitimacy that anti-regime forces enjoyed in other countries (the most obvious examples being Solidarity in Poland and Charta 77 in Czechoslovakia). The 'historical parties' needed to legitimise themselves in the actual political context, which they could provisionally achieve by invoking their alleged democratic past (Pîrvulescu 1994*b*: 5).

The most important of the 'historical parties' was the NPCDP, the successor of the interwar National Peasant Party, formed in 1990 by Corneliu Coposu (the secretary of Iuliu Maniu, the leader of the interwar party). The formation of the party was triggered directly by the NSF's declaration of participation in the elections. The main political objective was to 'obtain power in the local and general elections of 1992 by means of a common strategy' (Tudor and Gavrilescu 2002: 128). As the party's frame of reference was that of a restoration of the past, that is to say, the interwar system of a constitutional monarchy, its main inspiration came from a strong anti-communism and therefore opposition to the ruling NSF (Pîrvulescu 1994*b*).

Similarly, in January 1990 the National Liberal Party was re-established as the successor party to the National Liberal Party that had dominated nineteenth-century and interwar Romanian politics. The National Liberal Party fared relatively well in the May 1990 elections, but its role as the single representative of the liberal doctrine in Romanian politics quickly eroded after the elections as various liberal currents were institutionalised in rival liberal parties in the following years. The first faction to split off from the main party was composed of a group of young parliamentarians and entrepeneurs, representing the generational conflict between young pragmatists and the older generation which had experienced communist imprisonment (Pîrvulescu 1994*a*: 4).

The Party of Romanian Social Democracy was re-established in the summer of 1990 in an attempt to appeal to the working class, which, however, had already been successfully courted by the populism of the NSF (Vosganian 1992: 9).

Two other, rather dissimilar, parties were of importance in the coalition of anti-communist forces, the party of the Hungarian minority (DUHR) and the 'civic liberal' party, the CAP. The first represented various parties and organisations of the Hungarian minority and sought increased collective rights and cultural autonomy for national minorities. The latter was set up to create an alternative to the historical parties. At the time of its foundation, in 1991, the CAP explicitly presented itself as an alternative to the existing political parties, in that it actively promoted large-scale change, radical economic reform and rapid integration into European structures (Ionescu 1994: 8).

Despite the common goal to defeat post-communism and create an 'authentic democracy', the democratic coalition partially disintegrated during the immediate years after the 1992 elections. The main element of strife between the constituent parties was the domination of the peasant party in the coalition (Cornea 1994).[225]

In the run-up to the November 1996 presidential and parliamentary elections, the Democratic Convention comprised the peasant party, the 'historical' Liberal party, and some other liberal formations. Despite its rather volatile structure, the Europe-oriented and reform-minded Convention and its presidential candidate Emil Constantinescu won the elections, after a significant success in the local elections earlier that year. The victory of the opposition meant that for the first time since 1989 the emergence of political forces that sought a clear break with the communist past and the conscious pursuit of a continuation of a pro-Western project in Romania were in power (cf. Tismăneanu 1996). At the time of the elections, the larger democratic coalition (in fact consisting of three coalitions) included the DC, the Social Democratic Union (SDU), headed by Petre Roman, the former prime minister, and the DUHR.

[225] In a protest against the 'dictatorship' of the peasant party over the other members, the first party to leave the coalition was a small social-democratic party. The CAP and a Liberal party (the Liberal Party '93) left the coalition as well, leaving behind the peasant party, another small Liberal party and an ecological party (Roper 2000: 78).

The most important reasons for this radical political change were, firstly, the fact that the PDSR had been discredited by severe socio-economic problems, such as continuing inflationary pressure and falling living standards. In addition, corruption scandals and the decline in popularity of president Iliescu played a role. The highly personalised political system around Iliescu came to be increasingly identified with the past (Tismăneanu 1997: 440). Secondly, the opposition was much better organised than in 1992. With its 'Contract With Romania', a list of problems to be solved in 200 days,[226] modelled on the 1994 U.S. Republican Party campaign, it appealed to fears over social deterioration (Shafir 1996*c*). The government coalition was headed by Victor Ciorbea, a former trade union leader and at that time mayor of Bucharest. The new government claimed to be resolutely in favour of Western-type of reforms, and, in order to underline the rupture with the past, immediately initiated an anti-corruption and crime campaign. Early EU and NATO entry negotiations were made a major foreign policy objective, although the diplomatic efforts were rewarded neither with NATO-membership nor with the inclusion of Romania in the first 'wave' of enlargement. This constituted a major disappointment for a government whose legitimation was mostly based on its ability to implement rapid change, and of which the memberships of both the NATO and the EU were highly significant symbols. Partly related to this disillusionment, intra-coalition (and intra-party) struggles paralysed the government.

A major source of difficulty in the coalition was the fact that its cohesion was founded on a 'negative unity', based on opposition to the former Communists from which a broad frame of reference was derived. This frame was essentially defined by a set of rather indeterminate goals, i.e. the need for rapid economic reforms, integration into Euro-Atlantic structures and the fight against corruption and crime (cf. Pavel 1998*b*). Primary conflicts concerned the rhythm of economic reforms, measures concerning the 'correction' of the communist past (the restitution of land and property), and collective, cultural rights for national minorities (in particular the Hungarian minority). In December 1997, a government reshuffle was undertaken that was a direct consequence of a difference of opinion on the pace of economic reforms between the

[226] The contract, based on pragmatism, included the restitution of (agricultural) property to rightful, i.e. pre-communist, owners, various measures concerning the amelioration of the agricultural sector, as well as social measures (a basic income) (Contract cu România 1996).

NPCDP and the SDU (Baleanu 1998: 11; Pavel 1998*b*). In April 1998, after six months of political paralysis, prime minister Ciorbea was replaced by Radu Vasile, an economic historian. Ciorbea resigned because of the combined pressures stemming from domestic (the SDU) and international forces favouring the acceleration of reforms. The SDU had provoked a crisis in the governing coalition as it had criticised the NPCDP for its lack of decisiveness and inertia over reforms (Fati 2000). Vasile promised to go ahead with the reforms, admitting the continuity between his and the former government. Political problems within the governing coalition persisted, however. In September 1998, Vasile dismissed the Finance minister, Daianu, and the Privatisation minister, Dimitriu, in response to the continuous attacks on both ministers for failing to meet the planned pace of reform and privatisation. At the end of 1999, prime minister Vasile was replaced by Mugur Isarescu, former governor of the Romanian National Bank, an act which was primarily inspired by the rapidly falling popularity of the government, especially in view of the elections planned for the end of 2000 (*România Liberă*, 9-6-1999).

Iliescu's PSDR emerged as the victor in the parliamentary and presidential elections at the end of 2000. The Social-Democrats demonstrated a much stronger discursive adherence to a Western-type social-democracy than previously and could therefore present themselves as a social alternative to the neoliberally inspired economic reform policies of their predecessor. Additionally, this time they underscored their adherence to European integration and democratic values while presenting an economic reform programme with social-democratic elements. The former ruling coalition of centre-right parties (by now only comprising the peasant party and some small parties whereas the National Liberal Party and the Democratic Party ran separately) suffered a round defeat. Only the party of the Hungarian minority was able to secure its 'normal' percentage of 6 percent of the votes. The coalition's inability to pursue a common agenda on reform and produce a coherent and locally relevant discourse (see chapter 11), or bring about a radical change with the past, along with repeated corruption scandals had weakened its position and credibility as capable of implementing decisive change. After the elections in 2000, the political landscape was then primarily shaped by the Social-Democrats, who were now perceived as the 'democratic option', and the extreme right-wing party GRP which managed to obtain twenty percent of the votes by claiming to be the only

non-establishment party and therefore not embroiled in corruption and ineffectual policy-making (Pop-Eleches 2000: 157; Popescu 2003: 328). But whereas in the 1992-1995 period one could still observe some elective affinity between the Social-Democrats and the extremists, the evolution of the Social-Democrats now prohibited the repetition of such a coalition. The Party of Social Democracy (as it was now called) formed a minority government, headed by Adrian Năstase, with the parliamentary support of the party for the Hungarian minority and the National Liberal Party. After some months, the NLP withdrew from the agreement, leaving the DUHR as the sole supporter of the government.

10.3 The double transformation process

Conflicts over the interpretation of the meaning and function of reforms dominated the post-1989 period. Although the revolution itself entailed a dual critique – systemic and political – at the time of the collapse of the Communist regime there were virtually no coherent alternative discourses available that embodied a systemic critique and provided the revolutionaries with answers on how to construct a post-revolutionary order (cf. Offe 1996: 30). Thus, immediately after the regime change the transformation was left without a clear *telos* (as an outright restoration of communist discourse could not (yet) be legitimated, and alternatives in the form of an explicit endorsement of Western models had still to be formulated clearly, as Westernisation as a discourse had been repressed and crowded out by the national-Communist discourse of Ceauşescu). Despite general disorder in terms of uncrystallised political forces and the lack of clear visions of change, reforms were generally interpreted as having a 'double' nature, re-introducing the market economy and allowing for political pluralism. The general, but minimal, consensus on the need for change was the outcome of, on the one hand, the widespread abhorrence of the socio-economic and political pathologies of 'really existing socialism', and, on the other, the 'elective affinity' between dissenting thought under communism and European and Western societal models (cf. Bauman 1994: 19). In general, then, economic reforms were seen as entailing at least some reversal of the nationalisation of the economy (and thus the restitution of state property into private hands or the creation of other forms of property, the creation of a market, as well as a certain limitation to

state intervention in the economy). Essentially then, there was consensus on the necessity of creating a capitalist economy, based on market conditions and rules (so as to create markets for goods, services, capital, and labour) and the creation of forms of property other than state ownership. The primacy of economic reform in the overall transformation was, however, to become a major element of political conflict.

Similarly, the necessity of introducing a democratic form of government was shared by all significant political actors (consisting of the (re-)establishment of civil rights in some form of social contract between state and society, and based on a constitution and the accountability of state power by means of a system of representation (parliament) and the separation of powers, cf. Offe 1996: 43). Nevertheless, as indicated above, the actual substance of democratic institutions, their meaning in the Romanian context, and the relation between economic and political reforms were object of continuous discontent.

The parameters for transformation were largely the result of an international environment in which the regulatory capacities of the state were deemed no longer applicable in the globalised world economy, and found their expression in the promotion of economic policies which emphasised deregulation and privatisation. In other words, the retreat of politics from the economy was promulgated, and social cohesion and solidarity were deemed only preservable by means of integration into the world economy and the stimulation of international competivity (Crouch and Streeck 1997: 10). This view of social change based 'on a strong belief in the market as a kind of meta-institution of social change' was strongly endorsed by international financial institutions, but also by social scientists and policy makers (Bönker *et al.* 2002). In Eastern Europe, such policies found an 'elective affinity' with those policy makers and political élites that agreed upon the complete failure of communism as a societal model. At the same time, this meant that those political élites that for a variety of reasons (close affinity with the Communist regime, fear of loss of recently regained national sovereignty, social pressure) were not willing to follow a neoliberally inspired policy model were in a rearguard position in defending state intervention and upholding more traditional notions of social cohesion through state action.

In the analysis of reforms in the post-communist countries, this duality can be understood as an intricate and reciprocal relation between economy and politics. The

dual nature is then not only defined by reference to two spheres in national society, but also by the fact that proposed reforms in each sphere provide some kind of solution for both the national and the social questions. Economic reforms are not only assessed and criticised on the basis of their implications for economic change, but also on the basis of their presumed social consequences for the wider community, and hence, the question of who is to take part in that community and on what basis irrevocably poses itself. Thus, in the neoliberal model, responsibility for dealing with the social question is placed on the level of the individual and civil society, implicitly promoting a thin model of citizenship, ultimately based on the individual right to private property and individual capacities. This however opens the way for a 'social' critique of neoliberal proposals, reproaching their consequences for society-wide solidarity, and, potentially turning into a 'political' critique seeking to defend the homogeneity of the national community as such. In contrast, in a traditional social-democratic model, responsibility for dealing with social marginalisation is placed on the level of the state, indicating a thicker model of citizenship based on a community of similarly eligible individuals. To define this community, some kind of common denominator is needed, such as the nation. Such a model is mainly open to an 'economic' critique pointing out the need for rationalisation and efficiency. Furthermore, the neoliberal model places national sovereignty within an international context, that is to say, as only fully realisable through integration into the international economy, whereas a traditional 'social-democratic' model emphasises the need for nation-state based sovereignty, i.e. for the state's ability to act internally, to guarantee social rights etc.

The post-communist governments could not escape these questions, as their re-opening had formed an important part of the revolution and their renewed solution would thus provide the ultimate meaning and legitimation of the revolution. Not only were actors in the international environment pushing for a clear break with the communist past, but also domestic politics actors, who strongly based their legitimacy and political position in anti-communism. Nevertheless, room for interpretation on how to pursue reforms was in Romania relatively large (compared to other post-communist countries), as there had been no sedimentation of (neo-)liberal ideas during the Communist regime, and therefore, at least initially, no influential social group could claim that these ideas had directly triggered the revolution. Furthermore, the critique on

communism of the most powerful group in society, that had 'captured' the revolution was mostly limited to a critique of the dictatorial regime, not of the immanent concepts of Romanian national Communism such as étatism, egalitarianism and ethnic nationalism. Since initially, the communist system was not effectively critiqued by any significant political actor, the former Communists could offer a 'Third way' in pursuing reform, in which particular elements of the Communist regime survived, thereby differing from the internationally dominant neoliberal model.

The purpose of the following is not so much to provide a detailed overview of economic programmes of transformation and an account of their consequences, but to outline the general strategies followed and the intentions of the political élites in power. The emphasis is on the scope and intended pace of significant reforms in the economic sphere, and their relation to the political purposes of transformation. Here, the distinction between choices for social justice and market efficiency/rationality is important.

Economic reforms

The post-communists. The former Communists of the NSF, who were in government from 1990 until late 1996, followed a policy line in which the preservation of elements of communism - i.e. enduring state centralism, national sovereignty, interventionism, and social egalitarianism - constituted a core element, but in which the necessity to adapt to a changed geo-political context was simultaneously acknowledged. The significance of these two elements - preservation and adaptation - could be discerned in all attempts at economic reform. A substantive commitment to the preservation of national sovereignty, both internally (concentrated in the state) and externally, and to the prevention of the social dislocation of the population ultimately found its expression in a strategy composed of gradual institutional integration into international structures as well as state controlled domestic reform.

The post-communist approach to that part of economic transformation with potentially the most radical implications – i.e. the retreat of the state from the economy or privatisation - exhibited this tension between preservation and change. Whereas a broad consensus existed on the need for privatisation as such among the Romanian political élites (cf. Ronnas 1992), the scope and pace of the actual process was subject to resistance and the defence of an étatist vision. The manner in which the post-

communists pursued privatisation essentially conformed to the main institutional objectives of its modernisation project, i.e. an interventionist state, an emphasis on social solidarity, and the avoidance of social polarisation in a 'social market economy' (see chapter 11).

Privatisation was initiated in 1990 and 1991 with issuing three laws concerning the transformation of socialist enterprises into privatisable and non-privatisable entities (the so-called process of corporatisation), land ownership, and the privatisation process. Its overall scope and progress were severely limited as a result of the division of state-owned enterprises into commercial enterprises subject to privatisation (53 percent of total state ownership) and so-called 'regies autonomes' which were insulated from privatisation (47 percent). In this way, state ownership and control were maintained. The regies autonomes were deemed to be situated in 'strategic branches of the national economy - armament, energy, mining and natural gas, the postal services and railway transportation - as well as in some areas belonging to other branches, as decided by the government' (Law no. 15/1990, cited in: Negrescu 2000). Those companies designated as regies autonomes continued to be entitled to state subsidies and were not subject to bankruptcy. In this way, their functioning was effectively kept outside of the market environment. In the case of land ownership, despite initial adherence to the restitution of property, state ownership prevailed over private ownership. The right to restitution was limited so as not to affect agricultural productivity negatively, and state farms were excluded from the process. Furthermore, restituted property was not allowed to be sold, prohibiting the marketisation of land (Negrescu 2000).

The proceeding privatisation of those companies that had been designated as 'commercial companies' was subject to continuing state involvement. The portfolios of commercial companies were redistributed to the State Ownership Fund and five regionally and sectorally based Private Ownership Funds.[227] In the first Mass Privatisation Programme (1992), some 30 percent of the state capital entrusted to these intermediary institutions was distributed to the population, whereas 70 percent remained in the hands of the institutions. The institutions were regarded as temporary (they were

[227] Despite the apparent independent and intermediary status of these institutions, they remained subject to government control as their boards of directors were appointed by the government (Earle and Telegdy 2001: 5).

to function for a period of five years) and basically acted as intermediaries between private shareholders and the state, thus preserving the possibility for the state to monitor and control management (Cernat 2002: 81-2). In 1995, the Second Mass Privatisation Programme was to lead to an acceleration of the privatisation of state capital, this time by the issuing of non-tradable coupons, but the state often kept a large (majority) share in companies (Earle and Telegdy 2001: 8).[228] The choice of method for the privatisation of state property - mass privatisation through the issuance of vouchers or coupons to the public - seems to indicate the post-communists' desire to legitimate the creation of capitalism and a market economy as such (by involving the population), and to invoke the principle of social justice (cf. Stark and Bruszt 1998, chapter 3, for this argument).

The post-communists hardly regarded privatisation (and concomitant claims to efficiency and rationalisation) as an objective in itself, but rather as an instrument for the creation of a social market economy which was to be based on the substantive goals of social solidarity and national prosperity. Rather than assuming such reasoning to be completely detached from explanations in the line of 'political capitalism' and pure power politics (which are the most common reasons offered for the post-communist reluctance towards reducing state power), one should consider how the post-communists defined political power in the first place. As their main objectives were to recreate a strong state in the service of the ethnic majority, and they perceived national sovereignty not only as a formal issue, but also as substantive independence from external interference, the strategies promoted by the opposition (such as a 'shock therapy' and a radical opening of the economy to foreign investment) were not only considered to be detrimental in terms of social solidarity, but also as undermining the political control of the national majority over principal resources (hence the post-communists' slogan 'we do not sell the country'). One could detect a similar rationale behind the post-communists' approach towards other fields of macro-economic policy-making. In general, what was most revealed in the policy-making of the post-communist governments was, first, the conservation of administrative control (both

[228] Eventually, the most common form of privatisation in the first half of the 1990s emerged as Manager and Employee Buy Out schemes (MEBO), often a spontaneous process stimulated by incentives given to firms' managers and employees in the Mass Privatisation Programs.

central and local) over principal resources and their distribution, and, second, the maintenance of the large state enterprises (Pasti *et al.* 1996: 92).

As in privatisation, where the bulk of large state-owned enterprises were effectively removed from the process, in socio-economic policy-making the emphasis was on softening the costs of transition for the major part of the labour force employed in the regies autonomes[229](cf. Pasti *et al.* 1996). These policies were justified as a continuous adherence to egalitarianism, a principle closely related to the maintenance of employment.[230] At an early stage, such policies could still be located in the context of reparation, i.e. the neutralisation of the social policies of Ceauşescu, which had led to widespread poverty during the 1980s.[231] However, the NSF continued to adopt measures of social relief, which followed not only a logic of populism (these measures were often taken during election periods[232]), but were at the same time consistent with

[229] This was pursued through wage policies that entailed the regulation of wage development in order to control excessive wage demands by means of income policies, but at the same time sought to avoid a substantial decline in real wages by means of indexation and the adoption of a minimum wage (Jackson 2001: 396). Furthermore, various post-communist governments interfered by raising wage levels on an ad-hoc basis.

[230] In the early 1990s, the post-communists clung to a principle of 'full employment' as the most important means of guaranteeing social equality and avoiding poverty and polarisation. By 1995, though, a minimum level of unemployment was accepted (Voicu and Voicu 1999: 590-98).

[231] In 1990, the NSF government provided for wage increases, the maintenance of price controls on essential goods, a restriction on the export of foodstuffs, increased imports (of consumer goods), and a general relief for workers by shortening the working week and allowing early retirement in order to decrease official unemployment levels (see Daianu 1999: 10; Stan 1997: 129). Specific groups in society were especially receptive to such policies, in particular industrial workers, peasants and the state bureaucracy, who, for their own reasons, feared the negative consequences of rapid transformation and the opening up of the country to the outside world (Baleanu 1998: 4).

[232] In the run-up to the September 1992 elections earlier adopted, more rigid, reform policies were substituted for policies that provided additional benefits to workers (Roper 2000: 93). Similarly, in the run-up to the November 1996 elections, the post-communist government countered a 'market ethos' by increasing public spending. And especially after the local elections in June 1996, in which the PSDR performed poorly and the centre-right opposition won in almost all major cities, including Bucharest, the government introduced social measures (*Financial Times*, 9-7-1996; RFE, 21-8-1996).

the post-communist emphasis on the prevention of social polarisation and the social protection of the workers.

Despite the overall emphasis on social solidarity and étatism, some elements of the neoliberal approach of marketisation were adopted (for instance, the reduction of inflation to minimal levels, the stabilisation of the state budget, and the creation of the institutional framework for markets). Yet, if these policies were in potential tension with strong forms of social solidarity, at the same time they could be easily understood as elements of crisis management and adaptation in a period of rapid economic decline and extremely high (two digit) inflation rates. The adoption of these measures did in itself not undermine the government's main objectives and could further be understood through the NSF's tendency to transform the post-communist outlook into a social-democratic one, i.e. by accepting some level of marketisation, liberalisation and stabilisation (cf. Adamson 2000). Indeed, when reformist forces within the post-communist party did push for a marketisation strategy, which seemed to threaten the overall policy paradigm, it led to a profound crisis and division of the party. This was the case in the early 1990s, when prime minister Petre Roman attempted to introduce a neoliberally inspired stabilisation plan, supported by the IMF. The reform programme involved the acceleration of privatisation by means of the above-mentioned mass privatisation programme, price liberalisation and the removal of subsidies, and a reduction in real wages from the beginning of 1991 (Smith 2001: 132-3). As mentioned earlier, Roman's reform attempt led to both a split in the governing party and to serious social tensions that ultimately led to his resignation. When the successor government of the technocrat Theodor Stolojan continued reforms initiated by Roman, including a policy of integration into the West-European and global economy (see below), these reforms did not substantially affect the main outline of the post-communist programme. The Văcăroiu government (1992-1996) claimed to go against the 'classical liberalism' of its predecessors, although its four-year reform programme entailed partial privatisation (limited to trade, tourism, services, and small enterprises, not touching the *regies autonomes*), and stabilisation and liberalisation measures (Ionescu 1993).

The anti-communist coalition. If the reform policies of the post-communists were characterised by conservatism, on the one hand, and a tendency towards a social-democratic understanding of reforms, on the other, the common denominator of the democratic coalition was its adherence to a 'market ethos' expressed in a neoliberal shock therapy. The coalition forcefully argued against a 'third way', and the coming to power of the opposition in 1996 was widely regarded as the first decisive rupture with the Communist regime. The crisis narration articulated by the coalition consisted primarily of anti-communism/anti-totalitarianism as well as (market) rationalisation, which portrayed the post-1989 period as one of a profound political crisis of morality, authority, and credibility as well as of economic inefficiency and the irrationality of a centralised, planning state. In turn, this was directly linked to the continuity with the communist past embodied by the NSF/PSDR. Major proposals to transcend the crisis were found in the promotion of a constitutional state and the stimulation of civil society, as the 'single guarantee for the democratisation of life' (Voicu and Voicu 1999: 640-1). Civil society was at the same time identified with market dynamism and entrepeneurialism (see chapter 11).

The CDR promoted an economic programme that was based on the 'shortening of the transition' and marketisation, and a political-economic strategy that essentially hinged on an explicit commitment to Euro-Atlantic integration and the opening up of the economy. In political practice the CDR followed a much more drastic approach, both in terms of scope and pace, than the preceding post-communist governments (see Daianu 1999; de Menil 2003; Negrescu 2000). The privatisation process was extended to include the regies autonomes in 'mainstream' privatisation by converting them into commercial companies and by 'demonopolising' public utilities (although a continuing distinction was made between 'national companies' and commercial companies, which also meant that no former regie autonome was entirely converted into a commercial company) (Negrescu 2000). In August 1997, 2,750 companies were presented for privatisation, while 10 large state-owned enterprises responsible for major losses were to be privatised or closed (Stoica 2002: 107). In early 1998, privatisation was to go ahead with a further 1,600 companies and industrial restructuring, especially of big utilities, was to be accelerated. At the end of 1998, the State Ownership Fund tried to conclude major privatisation deals (RomTelecom, the Romanian Development Bank)

and to close down major state-owned companies, apparently to stave off a threatening financial crisis in 1999 (Daianu 1999: 18). Nevertheless, while 'strategic' companies were now included in the privatisation process, the implementation of privatisation deals proved in reality to be complex, as major firms proved eventually difficult to sell and the revenues of sold firms turned out to be lower than expected (Tinteanu 1998). In 1999, the only significant deal was the sale of the Romanian car company Dacia to the French Renault (Matyas 2000). In general, though, in the period 1997-2000, privatisation went ahead faster than before as it involved an increasing number of large companies, while a higher percentage of the state equity of the State Ownership Funds was privatised, and more privatisation transactions involved foreign investors (Negrescu 2000).

The centre-right's commitment to the neoliberal reform design followed the triptych of privatisation, stabilisation and price liberalisation. Strong emphasis was placed on the immediate liberalisation of all prices by ending price controls, and the reduction in state expenditure. The latter was achieved through the cutting of subsidies to enterprises and agriculture, and by dropping state support for consumer prices (basic commodities and public transportation). The adoption of these measures was tightly linked to the provision of credits by the IMF and the World Bank, which made further demands in terms of tight budgetary and inflationary policies and liberalisation of the exchange rate regime. In early 1997, Ciorbea made public the government's reform programme, drafted with the World Bank and the European Union, which encompassed more than 80 reform laws and consisted of the complete removal of price controls, and the acceleration of privatisation in 3,600 companies in 1997, including the banking sector with major banks such as Bancorex and the Romanian Bank of Development (RFE, 10-4-1997). In addition, the programme announced the reorganisation, closure or sale of non-profitable state companies, the elimination of state subsidies as well as the reform of state farms (de Nève 1998: 943; Matyas 1998). Notwithstanding these reform efforts, at the end of 1997 the pace of reforms was criticised both by international institutions and internally by various parties in the ruling coalition, most importantly the Democratic Party. The latter accused the government of a lack of decisiveness in carrying out reforms, and of delaying privatisation (Stoica 2002: 114). A new programme of reforms was adopted in early 1998, which announced continued

inflationary policies, the consolidation of the state budget as well as promises for the acceleration of restructuring of enterprises (Roper 2000; Stoica 2002: 117). The governmental crisis continued though, and could eventually only be resolved through the resignation of prime minister Ciorbea. After this resolution of the political paralysis which had lasted some six months within the governing coalition, a new economic reform programme was prepared, whose primary aims were to create macro-economic stability, institutionalise strict financial discipline, and discontinue the subsidisation of loss-making firms (Baleanu 1998: 23; Stoica 2002: 119). Another political crisis manifested itself at the end of 1999, when four major trade unions asked for the demission of prime minister Vasile, who was deemed incapable of reform (Pavel and Huiu 2003: 370-3). President Constantinescu and the NPCDP also withdrew their support for the prime minister, who was seen as the wrong candidate to lead the negotiations with the EU (Romania had been invited at the Helsinki summit of December 1999 to start negotiations). The new government led by the central bank president Isărescu adopted yet another programme for 2000, aiming at turning the tide of high inflationary pressures and economic decline, followed by a package of measures for fiscal relaxation to stimulate the economy (Stoica 2002: 141).

The strategy of the anti-communist coalition in the period 1997-2000 was primarily informed by a 'market ethos', having as a primary objective the stimulation of the market economy in order to enhance efficiency and rationality in the economy and to bring about a decisive shift from a state controlled economy to an economy dominated by private actors. Its project of marketisation was, however, compromised by two factors. First of all, the implementation of its economic strategy partially led to the suspension of its political objectives such as decentralisation, formal-legal rationalisation, and the reduction of state intervention. This was discernible in the way the economic programme was implemented. The government mostly bypassed the parliament by issuing 'emergency ordinances' regarding key areas in economic reform (see Stoica 2002), therefore confounding rather than rationalising decision-making. In the privatisation process, a tendency towards the imposition of political control over the key institution in privatisation - the State Ownership Fund - could be observed. Further, the responsibilities of both the SOF and the Ministry of Privatisation were overlapping

and vaguely defined (cf. Negrescu 2000). The latter clearly had an impeding effect on the pace of the privatisation process.

A second element, which compromised reform efforts was a fragile positive consensus over reform. As observed earlier, the coalition was primarily held together by a negative consensus in the form of anti-communism. When assuming government responsibilities (and thus having achieved its primary objective, defeating the post-communists), the coalition proved to have rather little in common, apart from a broadly defined neoliberal programme. In particular after the failure to obtain NATO membership in 1997 (which could have served as an institutional 'anchor') an absence of consensus on major issues emerged (cf. Pavel and Huiu 2003). The absence of consensus among the anti-communist, reformist forces can in itself be explained from the lack of local discursive traditions on which to build for the construction of a radically different societal order. The one-sided reliance on external models and the failure to transpose these models into the local context made that the anti-communist coalition was open to various forms of critique (the social-democratic opposition was much more successful at constructing a balanced discourse, see chapter 11). The project encountered fierce criticism both from the political opposition and society as such (most significantly by trade unions). The coalition could not avoid widespread social dislocation in the form of unemployment and rapidly declining income levels. And because the CDR's solution for the social question resided in the stimulation of continuous economic growth and the concomitant expectation of widespread amelioration of social life, the failed materialisation of an economic upswing could only lead to a fierce 'social' critique.[233] This also caused the coalition to abandon its main objectives on various occasions, while attempting to cushion the effects of the economic reforms by increasing wage levels.[234]

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[233] The most important opposition party, the PSDR, claimed that the governing coalition was squandering national wealth through debt repayments. The government was further accused of perilising democracy through instigating social unrest and violence while pursuing a 'totalitarian attempt' at transforming the economy (PDSR 1999a).

[234] Price liberalisation and privatisation measures, leading to closures and cuts in subsidies, led to a severe drop in living standards (which had already dropped by some 20 per cent since 1989, see *Financial Times*, 25-6-1997). Social dislocations led to serious social unrest in the form of a multitude of strikes and demonstrations. One of the gravest uprisings took place in one of the

Political change

The political revolution of 1989 re-opened the so-called national question, i.e. the question of what holds the community together, as it constituted a rupture with the fundamental premises of the previous society. The former national Communist regime had been based on the fused identity of the Romanian ethnicity and the communist New Man. The revolution strongly questioned such an imposed identity, as it was concerned with reclaiming human autonomy and opening the political arena to alternative visions. Although the new regime reiterated the ethno-cultural conception of community and emphasised national unity against potential disruptive elements (embodied by the Hungarian minority, foreign powers as well as oppositional political forces), the revolution had irrevocably opened up the space for criticism of such an interpretation of national identity.

The post-communists. Despite the declaration of the NSF on 22 December 1989 that it would 'renounce the leading role of a single party and to establish a democratic and pluralist system of government' (Iliescu 1995a), its behaviour in the first half of the 1990s indicates, first of all, an attempt to limit as far as possible the discursive space that had been opened up by the revolution, and, secondly, to dominate that discursive space by introducing the concept of 'original democracy', a democracy based not on a pluralist representation of interests but on a national consensus embodied by the governing party. In addition, the post-communists reiterated the ethnic conception of community, as based on a shared language and culture. The new élite's perception of change consisted of the idea of 'controlled change', i.e. a certain amount of change was deemed necessary, but only within strictly defined limits.

The uneven struggle over the domination of discursive space and over political change in general came to the fore in the political process that led to the formulation and adoption of the new constitution. The constitution of 1991 was almost exclusively produced by the post-communists, as they directly took over executive as well as

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historically most important industrial sectors and a major debtor to the state budget, the mining industry (Martin and Cristesco-Martin 1999: 397). As a direct reaction to government intentions to thoroughly restructure the mining industry, miners from the Jiu Valley started another mineriadă on Bucharest in January 1999. Eventually concessions were granted by prime minister Vasile.

legislative power from the Communist regime while the so-called Provisional Council of National Unity, which was to create the legal framework for the elections of the legislative assembly or parliament, only symbolically included opposition parties (Tudor and Gavrilescu 2002: 98; Weber 2001). Moreover, this 'constitutional pact' was only created after political and popular pressure arose against the political dominance of the NSF (Vosganian 1994: 6). The constitution that was eventually adopted in 1991 - by a parliament that consisted of 70 percent ruling party members whereas a majority of two thirds was required (Weber 2000) - was a completely novel one, which meant that the post-communists could suggest a clear break with the past. Simultaneously they could prevent the re-introduction of the constitution of 1923 (which would re-establish a monarchy), as favoured by the historical parties, and strongly anchor the republican form of state in the constitution (Gabanyi 1998: 207). Therefore, the mode in which the NSF extricated itself from the Communist Party and was subsequently able to establish itself as the governing party ensured not only the impunity of ex-Communists and their political survival but also their continuity as political leaders (Barbu 1999: 152).

The opposition parties indeed voted against the new constitution in parliament, one of their arguments being the omission of an explicit reference to the separation of powers (Vosganian 1994: 7). The ruling party itself interpreted the role of the executive as embodying in and of itself popular sovereignty. This was not only discernible in its institutional dominance, but also became clear in the relation between the government and those that chose to deviate from government opinion.[235] The government barely tolerated critique of its position and legitimacy, which in some cases even led to violence against political and civic opposition.[236] In substantial terms, the new constitution created a semi-presidential system, similar to the French one, in which the president has a relatively dominant position and disposed of extensive prerogatives. The

[235] Within the ruling party itself similar tendencies towards limiting ideological expressions could be observed, especially in the conflict between president Iliescu and prime minister Roman, which, after the division of the NSF, lapsed into a kind of trench war, in which the legitimacy of each faction was strongly questioned by the other.

[236] The most extreme example of the latter was when, in June 1990, and in response to a plea for support by president Iliescu, miners from the Jiu Valley marched on Bucharest and used widespread violence against peaceful protesters for democracy.

president's powers include the nomination of the prime minister and the head of the Romanian Intelligence Service (Wiener 1997: 9). By dominating the process of constitution drafting and electoral legislation, the ruling party could favourably influence its dominance in the future government.[237] Particularly in a context of a rather disorganised and divided opposition the NSF was guaranteed of an electoral victory (Gabanyi 1998: 213).

Apart from limiting the possibility of expression for different perceptions of a future Romanian society, the ruling party sought domination of this same discursive space by imposing, on the one hand, a vision of the state in which the ruling party dominates the political arena and embodies popular sovereignty, as expressed in the concept of 'original democracy', and, on the other, a vision of society based on the promotion of a 'national community' rather than a 'political community' (cf. Barbu 1999: 141). The identification of the ruling party as the embodiment of popular sovereignty, to the detriment of parliamentary institutions and oppositional political parties, was an outcome of its self-proclaimed exclusive representation of the revolutionary masses and its character of mass movement, i.e., a movement comprising diverse national interests and therefore superior to a 'normal' political party (Tudor and Gavrilescu 2002: 97). By imposing its particular vision of an 'original democracy', the NSF crowded out other, more pluralist visions of a democratic system as proposed by the opposition, where inter-party competition and civil society were crucial aspects. Iliescu's notion of original democracy was presented as an alternative to the notion of 'authentic' democracy held by the opposition. Original democracy entailed the unification and government in consensus of all political forces for the common good, and therefore skewed the idea of pluralist politics and inter-party competition (Pasti 1997: 162; Verdery 1996: 112). As Pasti (1997: 162-3) observes, the establishment of the Provisional Council for National Unity could be regarded as the institutionalisation of original democracy as it included virtually all political forces and embodied the idea of national consensus.

The emphasis of the need for consensus on reform and therefore the subordination of political forces to the 'national interest' found further expression in the definition of national harmony as one of unity between explicitly Romanian forces. In this, the post-

[237] Other elements also attributed to the ruling party's domination of the political field, for example its control of state television.

communists effectively moved against an understanding of the community as being a political community (as proposed by the opposition). Instead, they promoted an ethno-cultural understanding of the community, which de facto meant the marginalisation of national minorities and the denial of their demands for collective rights, such as local autonomy and cultural rights. It also meant, however, the marginalisation of those forces in society that sought to promote a vision of political community, in which social bonds have a political rather than ethnic nature.

The notion of a national community was institutionalised in the Romanian constitution of 1991. In principle, the constitution bases state sovereignty on the 'majority ethno-nation' and not on individual citizens: 'National sovereignty resides with the Romanian people' (Article 2:1) and 'The State foundation is laid on the unity of the Romanian people' (Article 4: 1) (Andreescu 2001: 273; Verdery 1996: 89; Weber 2001: 233-4). At the same time, and distinct from the definition of the Romanian people as unitary and as the basis of sovereignty, the constitution employs the concept of citizenship: 'Romania is the common and indivisible homeland of all its citizens, without any discrimination on account of race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, sex, opinion, political adherence, property or social origin' (article 4:2). As Barbu (1999: 143) points out, the constitution seems to work with two conceptions of citizenship, a pre-political one that is based on ethnic identity and serves as the basis for popular sovereignty, and another based on a political conception of citizenship in which all those residing on the territory enjoy certain rights and have certain obligations. As the identity rights are deemed unsatisfactory by some of the ethno-cultural groups, in particular the Hungarian minority in Transylvania (cf. Durandin 2000: 73-104), this ambiguity inherent in the constitution has led to various political and sometimes even violent conflicts over minority rights. Contestation of the essentially unitary definition of the state can be illustrated through the enduring conflict between those political parties that claim to rule in the name of the Romanian majority and the political party of the Hungarian minority.

A major part of this conflict is contained in the issue of collective rights for national minorities. The constitution of 1991 only refers to individual rights of minority members, whereas the party of the Hungarian minority has been pursuing local autonomy and the right to autonomous education and usage of the minority language.

The Hungarian minorities' pursuit for such rights has been most strongly denied by the extremist parties (most importantly the Party of National Union of Romania and the Greater Romania Party). The coalition with the extremist parties in parliament entered into after the elections of 1992 further impeded other perceptions of the national interest. The inter-ethnic debate centred on two major issues, demands for territorial autonomy and collective cultural rights by the political alliance of the Hungarian minority. Whereas the latter perceived the post-1989 political order as oppressing national minorities, the governing party interpreted the Hungarians' demands as irredentism and an infringement of Romanian sovereignty.[238]

As mentioned above, the changes of 1989 were informed by a generally shared renunciation of the Communist regime. At the same time, however, there was no clear understanding of or proposal for a future societal constellation. In this 'empty' ideational environment, the NSF adopted concepts that formed part of the anti-communist struggle all over Eastern Europe and which in Romania had especially been endorsed by the students and dissidents participating in the 'revolution from below'. One of the concepts that the NSF explicitly promoted on 22 December 1989 was the need for 'integration into the process of the construction of a united Europe, the common home of all the peoples of the continent' (Iliescu 1995a: 21). This expression of shared identity with Europe, or, in other words, the wish to once again undertake a project of modernisation inspired by Western Europe, showed, however, that the ideational context was not as empty as it seemed. Both the NSF and the democratic opposition promptly realised that a strategy of unbridled integration into Western structures would signify a drastic turn away from the past, and, therefore, would strongly problematise the role of ex-Communists in governing structures. Thus, where the NSF sought to limit change by promoting a specifically Romanian third way in which rapid integration and large-scale

[238] These contrasting views led to incessant debates on educational legislation (the Hungarian minority claimed the right to a Hungarian university as well as the right to teach in the Hungarian language) as well as a tense political relation with Hungary. The relationship with the latter only improved in 1996 with a 'historical reconciliation', when the governments of both countries signed a Basic Treaty, in which Hungary renounced territorial claims and Romania subscribed to upholding minority rights, a change in attitudes on both sides probably instigated by the desire to join the EU and NATO (Shafir 1996*b*).

reforms were deemed detrimental to the national interest, various oppositional groups organised against such a capturing of the revolution by forcefully arguing that the 'ideal of our revolution has been and remains a return to genuine values of democracy and European civilization' (Timişoara declaration 1990). In this way, the NSF tied itself to traditions of essentialism, in which Europe was interpreted as a threat to Romanian identity, whereas the democratic opposition (including the historical parties) sought to continue (or re-introduce) the tradition of Westernism. The political evaluation of adherence to the European Union (and other European and Western institutions) did not merely consist of an examination of possible socio-economic and institutional implications, but was central to the positioning of political actors within the frame of historically evolved perceptions on modernisation in Romania (cf. Verdery 1996: 104-30). While the NSF sought to reinsert itself in a relatively isolationist and essentialist tradition, it was vulnerable to criticism from both domestic and external actors, making it hard to completely reject 'Europe'. In addition, the governing party became increasingly susceptible to the 'coercive' effect that was the result of the conditionality involved in both IMF and EU economic support, as the NSF's expansionary policies in the early 1990s had made external economic resources absolutely necessary. The apparent paradox between the post-communists' indigenist and introspective approach towards modernisation, on the one hand, and its increasing search for insertion into the international environment from 1993 onwards, on the other, was not wholly contradictory. Although Iliescu and other more conservative elements in the NSF, and most certainly the extremist parties, were fiercely set against external interference in domestic affairs, they likely understood at the same time that serving the national interest could ultimately not do without recognition on the international level.

In the early 1990s, the post-communists seemed indeed to be rather reluctant to expand relations with organisations such as the EU and NATO. The limited nature of economic reforms undertaken by the NSF led to the exclusion of Romania from the Phare programme of the EU and to delays in negotiating a trade and co-operation agreement. The government's stance towards the ethnic conflicts in Transylvania and the violence used against the demonstrators in University Square in June 1990 led to condemnations from the EU, the Council of Europe and NATO. Furthermore, the NSF's foreign policy was badly received as it showed a supportive attitude towards Milosevic

as well as sympathy towards the Soviet Union (Phinnemore 2001: 252-3). At the same time, however, even if the NSF's strategy was rather conservative, it was certainly not entail a reactionary one aimed at re-installing communism or authoritarian isolationism (cf. Kligman and Verdery 1992). In fact, its economic approach was similar to Gorbachev's 'perestroika' in that it underlined the need for change but only by gradually introducing particular elements into the old system. Indeed, the NSF's more positive approach towards integration into Euro-Atlantic structures from 1993 onwards indicates that it perceived membership of international institutions as an integral element of national sovereignty.

The anti-communist opposition. The change in political power in 1996 was widely interpreted as a radical rupture with the past (see, for instance, Shafir 1996*c*; Tismăneanu 1997). Whereas in political-institutional terms such an interpretation might be justified - as most political scientists would agree, the peaceful electoral transition from semi-authoritarian to self-proclaimed democratic forces 'proved' the consolidation of democratic procedures – a substantial shift in political and strategic practices amongst the new political class was much less evident (cf. Pavel and Huiu 2003).

In terms of its overall political discourse, the democratic 'coalition of coalitions' could rightfully be regarded as the political embodiment of Europeanist and universalist traditions in Romania. The governing coalition's political programme (see chapter 11) was explicitly counterposed to the post-communist discourse and put strong emphasis on an 'authentic democracy' (meaning a constitutional state with clearly divided political powers, in particular in terms of parliamentary autonomy), the development of civil society independent of the state, and a comprehensive transition towards a market economy (pointing to the necessity of private property for both civic freedom and private initiative). The coalition's programme could justifiably be interpreted as a systemic critique of the communist and post-communist regime, and the promotion of a radically different societal order. This is exactly where the coalition claimed to be different from the post-communists. Such a programme of radical change was explicitly linked to those traditions in Romanian society, which supported Western conceptions and their emulation. The coalition considered Romania's natural place as being in

Europe and the West, and therefore showed a strong 'elective affinity' with the projects of European integration and Atlantic military co-operation.

In this light, it is not surprising that in early 1997 the governing coalition opted for a strategy of rapid emulation and Euro-Atlantic integration. The most immediate goal of the time was rapid integration into NATO structures, which, according to the new government, could take place already in the 'first round' of NATO enlargement after 1989, together with states such as Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. This opportunity appeared in July 1997 at the NATO summit in Madrid, at which the members of the first wave named. Eventual membership would evidently create a symbolic point of no return for the governing coalition, which in this way would be able to institutionalise a clear break with the (crypto-communist and isolationist) past. However, by focussing primarily on membership in international institutions, domestic reform was neglected or at least postponed. According to Dan Pavel, a well-known Romanian political scientist, the postponement of domestic reforms in the context of NATO admittance has created a pattern which was afterwards hard to break. The first six months of the new government were marked by its efforts to maintain 'social peace' and stability, relegating the decisive domestic break with the past announced in its programme to a future date. The first government of the democratic coalition under prime-minister Victor Ciorbea then initiated socio-economic policies that were characterised by a dual commitment to radical reforms and substantial social protection, which ran counter to the neoliberal logic pronounced in its programme (Pavel and Huiu 2003: 354-5). Furthermore, the strategy of rapid integration faltered (and so the institutionalisation of a clear rupture with the past), as the US government made clear as early as June 1997 that it would not support Romania's bid for membership, therefore effectively postponing Romania's membership to a later 'wave' (see Gross and Tismăneanu 1997).

The institutionalisation of a radical break with the past was to be based on a number of principles: successful integration into the international 'circuit', the establishment of an 'authentic democracy', and the comprehensive reform of the economy. If the first element was not achieved with unequivocal success, this could not be primarily attributed to a defective political strategy on the part of the governing coalition (in the Helsinki summit of the EU in December 1999 Romania was invited to begin

negotiations for membership). A much more elementary incongruity between radical discourse and political action was apparent in the institutionalisation of the second principle, 'authentic democracy'. The anti-communism of the self-defined democratic opposition from 1990-1996 had been the main element of its identity and political strategy. Anti-communism was interpreted by the opposition as a return to the 'normal' state of Romania. In order to reconstruct society on a new basis, the anomaly of communism had - according to the opposition - to be removed. On many occasions, the opposition evoked the 'crypto-communist', 'totalitarian', and 'authoritarian character' of the post-communist government and its project was to be based on an alleged diametrically opposed conception of society. Political action to institutionalise a new order was however conspicuously absent in the ruling period of the coalition (1996-2000). The main political critique of the post-communists - i.e. the lack of a clear separation of political power, the weak role of the parliament and the judiciary, and the decentralisation of political power[239] - was not countered by any comprehensive constitutional and political reform (Pavel and Huiu 2003: 362, 378-9).

The absence of radical change was not only discernible in an institutional-constitutional, but also in a political-behavioral sense. The democratic opposition had reproached the government in the period 1990-96 for transferring parliamentary legislative powers to the executive, as the government implemented 'ordinances' with a legislative value which were not immediately subject to parliamentary discussion, voting and modification. Despite this critique, the governmental coalition continued these practices of bypassing parliamentary and thus creating an effective preponderance of the executive over the legislative.[240] The legitimation for such political behaviour

[239] One of the main critiques on the Constitution of 1991 by the opposition was its violation of the principle of the division of powers through control of the government over the judiciary and its possibility of issuing 'ordinances', in this way bypassing the parliament. Furthermore, presidential powers were deemed excessive and undersupervised (Ştefănescu 1995: 185-6).

[240] Whereas in the period 1990-96 the goverment adopted 19 'emergency ordinances' and 213 'simple ordinances', in the period 1996-1999, the numbers were 288 and 322 respectively (Pavel and Huiu 2003: 363). Another (higher) estimate is mentioned by Stan, who speaks of 20 emergency ordinances in the case of the Iliescu-regime, and 684 in the case of the Constantinescu-regime (Stan 2002). Shafir (2001: 88) even speaks of the 'functional obliteration of the distinction between the legislature and executive'.

was the alleged necessity of rapid (economic) reform, which parliamentary scrutiny would slow down; reforms of an economic nature thus inhibited democratic reforms (cf. Stan 2002). No systemic change and relatively little change in political behaviour when compared to the coalition's predecessor was then noticeable.

The interpretation of the formation of the new government in 1996 as a decisive turn towards a Western-type democratic system was to an important extent attributed to the fact that the party of the Hungarian minority was included in the governing coalition. The participation of the DUHR apparently indicated that the ruling élite was following a course of inclusion towards national minorities (Shafir 2001: 95). This would entail that a strategy of 'nationalising nationalism' or the domination of the national majority over minorities was abandoned, and that a consensus between the demands of the Hungarian minority and the national majority position was sought. In short, it would indicate a shift to a more pluralistic and multi-national understanding of the nation-state, different from the definition of a national, unitary state contained in the constitution of 1991 (as well as the vision incorporated in the programme of the CDR of 1992). In 1997, a National Minorities Department was set up, whereas two emergency ordinances were adopted regarding local public administration (for instance, the use of bilingual street signs) and education in minority languages. However, by the end of 1997, the commitment of the governing coalition to inclusionary policies was placed in doubt, as members of the coalition turned against the amendments to existing laws that were proposed in the above-mentioned ordinances, using nationalist rhetoric (Andreescu 2001: 276; Weber 2001: 236). When the laws were finally approved in July 1999, the original intent of the amendments had been considerably diluted (Shafir 2001: 96).

The general attitude of the ruling coalition towards minority rights and the adoption of a vision of pluralism and inclusion was apparently directly related to its desire to realise its primary objective, integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. Both membership of the EU and NATO required the resolution of internal conflicts over minority-majority relations and externally the friendly relations with neighbouring countries. When the objective of rapid integration faltered, the coherence and effectiveness of the ruling coalition was severely undermined (the Hungarian minority party threatened to leave the coalition in 1998), Romania's external image damaged, and radical, extremist forces resuscitated. The stance of the Democratic Convention and Petre Roman's

Democratic Party against the demands of the Party of the Hungarian minority re-invoked an imaginary of national homogeneity, and in this way prolonged the conflict over the definition of nationhood and over the construction of the polity as such.

In sum, the anti-communist coalition failed to bring about a systemic rupture with the past, in which the 'ground rules' laid down by the post-communists in the early 1990s were significantly altered. Rather, in particular instances the anti-communists seem to have been reproducing a logic of paternalism, state intervention, and obfuscated political rule, rather than institutionalising a minimalised state operating according to strict norms of formal-legal rationality. Furthermore, no distinctive break was made with an ethno-cultural conception of citizenship, which means that a major conflict line was protracted and the promulgated universalistic, legal-rational organisation of the state as well as decentralisation of state competences were not fully effectuated.

11. Transnational discursive paradigms: neoliberalism and 'Europe'

11.1 Neoliberalism and 'Europe' as a 'mobilising metaphor'

The transformations in Eastern Europe in the 1990s took place in what Offe calls a 'dual context or cognitive frame of reference and comparison' of, on the one hand, understandings formed in the past, especially (but not exclusively) during the experience with communism, and, on the other, those dominant in the West (Offe 1996: 230). The latter can be said to combine two dominant discourses, neoliberalism and European integration. Taken as 'reference models' for the post-communist transformations, the two discourses tend to overlap in many respects, as both neoliberalism and European integration discourse call for an overall strategy of marketisation, and the implementation of structural adjustment policies in the form of privatisation, liberalisation and stabilisation, and hence point to the predominance of economic transformation in the overall process of change.[241] Nevertheless, at the same time, the two discourses can be said to be in tension with one another. European integration not only signifies economic integration, but also entails a form of political integration as well as an adherence to social coherence within the European community. Below, I will first delineate neoliberalism as a frame of reference for Eastern Europe, and, subsequently, turn to Europe as a 'mobilising metaphor', while pointing to the mutual tensions involved.

Neoliberalism. Supply-side economics and the neoliberal programme of policy-making emerged strongly in the last three decades of the twentieth century, and formed the main

[241] Whereas in neoliberalism this primacy of economics is clear, some have identified the project of European integration with a strong market-induced project, especially in the turn the project took from the mid-1980s onwards, starting with the adoption of the Single European Act in 1986, and continuing with the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, and ultimately the formation of the European Monetary Union. A similar primacy of the economy is allegedly part of the accession process with Eastern Europe (see, for instance, Gowan 1995).

alternative to the post-war model of welfarism. From the early 1970s onwards, the societal constellation in Western Europe designated by the label 'welfare state' became increasingly subject to a neoliberal critique that pointed to the major defects of a project of modernisation based on the collective end of social solidarity, realised on the level of the nation-state, through high levels of state involvement in the economy and in the provision of public goods. Neoliberalism basically argued for a new project of modernisation in which a general shift was to take place from the level of the state to the level of the private sphere (the market) and the individual (cf. Touraine 2001: 9). In this, protagonists of the neoliberal project argued for the primacy of the market economy in solving societal problems. This prominence of the market, or so the neoliberal critique claimed, would resolve two major crises of the modern political order, i.e. an economic crisis exemplified by stagnation in productivity levels and profit, and a political crisis expressed in a declining belief in the malleability of society. As the market was deemed more efficient in generating economic growth, the role of the state should be essentialised and minimalised, which, in turn, would release an entrepeneurial dynamic in society that would mark the return of Western societies to their previous high levels of economic growth and welfare provision. Additionally, it would free the state from the fiscal crisis it faced as ever higher demands were made on social provisions whilst productivity levels lagged behind, thereby creating a gap between the state's expenditure and its income levels. In short, the market would resolve general problems of economic stagnation, and provision and distribution of welfare. In a political sense, the increased intrusion of the post-war state in the private sphere was deemed to have reduced individual freedom in modern societies. The increased dependency of the individual on the state in economic matters (employment, income level, social provisions) inhibited his economic freedom, as his range of choice, and therefore the multiplicity of different understandings of economic ends was limited by the singular understanding provided by the state. By recreating individual freedom through the retreat of the state – and therefore coercion - from private life, the individual would again be free from constraints and interference from others in his own perception of the good life. Freedom from constraint in the economic sphere would therefore not only enhance the autonomy of the individual in pursuing economic ends but also further

political freedom, understood as freedom from the interference of authority in private matters.

1. Cultural inspiration. The neoliberal programme claims universal validity as its beneficial consequences for efficiency, rationalisation, as well as enhanced political freedom are deemed to function practically in any societal setting. It is exactly its relegation of morality and substantive values to the private sphere that makes the neoliberal programme potentially relevant as a political programme of reform. At the same time, the denial of the necessity of dealing with substantive issues on the political level makes neoliberalism vulnerable to a political critique in which it is reproached for not addressing issues of national identity, the protection of local values, and social solidarity.

2. Political foundations. The perception of freedom in neoliberalism is formulated in terms of a *negative* freedom, the individual is considered free if he is independent in the pursuit of his actions, and is unhindered by constraints imposed 'from above' or from fellow citizens (Smart 2003: 97). The retreat of the state from society, effectively reducing the scope of government by limiting the spheres of society in which governmental interference is considered legitimate, leads then to the liberation of the individual from coercive tutelage from above, and creates the pre-conditions for true freedom of action. As the market is regarded as a neutral arrangement, without a coercive structure capable of interference in individual lives, individuals can pursue those actions which they consider to lead most directly to the maximisation of their own interests. The liberation of the economic from the political thus also means that the individual is independent in deciding on his own personal vision of the good life, not subordinated in any way to a singular collective vision, institutionalised in the state and imposed through state policies.

In as much as an individualised vision of the good life precludes any social solidarity organised at the nation-state level, neoliberalism rests on the classical liberal idea that social harmony is best guaranteed by the collective pursuit of individual self-interests which will create the 'greatest good for the greatest number'[242] (cf. Gill 1994: 79). In

[242] Hayek refers to the beneficial effects of pursuing one's self-interest in the following way: '[t]hat we assist in the realization of other people's aims without sharing them or even knowing them, and

neoliberalism, freedom is perceived as the individual freedom of choice between a variety of alternatives when engaging in action, which also means the freedom to enter into or to abstain from social relations. Social relations are perceived as consisting exclusively of 'voluntary co-operation' focused on economic transactions, as co-operation on the basis of other considerations (political, cultural) is considered as interference in other citizens' lives. Social relations are ultimately reduced to contractual relations, whereas considerations based on a 'thicker' understanding of the collective (which could constitute the basis for solidarity or social justice) are seen as interfering with individual freedom. The rejection of solidarity based on a 'common set of values and shared purposes' leads to a society which is 'means-connected' rather than 'ends-connected' (Hayek, mentioned in: Smart 2003: 95). Moreover, the market is considered to be the source of a 'peaceful reconciliation of divergent purposes' (Hayek, mentioned in: Smart 2003: 96). In essence, this means that a previously existing social solidarity is to be 'privatised' and left to the consideration of the individual.

3. Socio-political practices. Notwithstanding the fact that neoliberalism embodies a *political* project of furthering market relations and individual freedom of choice in society, there is ultimately no direct link between its economic assumptions and a specific political form of organising society. As the market is its pinnacle, the neoliberal project needs a strong (though limited in scope) 'contextual' state in order to protect the rules of the market and order in society. However, this does not mean that a free market necessarily requires a democratic political order.[243] Despite the absence of a clear preference for a particular political form, most neoliberals invoke the democratic order, as Hayek does with his notion of a 'legal democracy' (see Held 1987), although their understanding entails a strongly limited form of democracy, providing the constitutional framework for the functioning of the market society, and ultimately being a 'utilitarian device' to safeguard liberty (Hayek, mentioned in: Held 1987: 249). Democracy is therefore limited in its ability to express popular sovereignty, as its functions are to be

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solely in order to achieve our own aims, is the source of strength of the Great Society' (Hayek, cited in: Smart 2003: 95).

[243] In fact, neoliberal politics have on occasion been implemented by authoritarian governments, such as in Chile in 1973 (cf. Gill 2002: 143).

strictly circumscribed by the rule of law and should not go beyond the guaranteeing of individual autonomy.

Neoliberalism clearly separates the political from the economic, relegating the state to the former, whereas the market and civil society embody the latter. Although the state in neoliberal discourse is perceived as a 'minimal state', restricted in its tasks to the provision of law and order, and counterposed to the 'Leviathan' of the welfare state, it is at the same time a strong state. In other words, neoliberalism entails a 'strategy for simultaneously increasing aspects of the state's power while restricting the scope of the state's actions' (Held 1987: 243-4). Such a vision of the state appears to provide a solution to the perceived crisis of the welfare state. State intervention in the economy is reduced in favour of enhanced flexibility in production and labour markets, and in the assumed releasing of innovative forces in the private sector. Furthermore, a 'minimal state' responds to the needs of the increased internationalisation of the economy as it leads to a more open, less regulated national market. In this sense, in the neoliberal state the only way of preserving national sovereignty is by integration into the international economy and the enhancing of the competitiveness of the national economy (cf. Crouch and Streeck 1997). Therefore, despite a minimalised status, strong regulatory state action is needed to restructure the market and create a competitive environment, for instance by securing the free mobility of capital and the flexibilisation of labour.

European integration. The idea of 'Europe', or, in a more limited sense, the European integration process, can not be said to constitute a coherent strategy or discourse that provides modernising élites with a clear-cut model of modernisation, even though the impact of Europe on its (future) member states is substantial in its 'direct' influence in terms of policy and institutional transfer (as exemplified by the importance of the adoption of the *acquis communautaire* and the honouring of the Copenhagen criteria by aspiring member states). Yet, beyond its purely institutional impact, 'Europe' involves more than an economic project, as it equally invokes ideological and symbolic meaning (cf. Chiantera-Stutte 2002). Especially in the wake of '1989', one could speak of the importance of the idea of Europe as a 'political idea and a mobilizing metaphor' (Strath 2002: 388). The latter is especially significant in the sense that it shapes the overall perceptions of élites on modernisation, as it necessarily precedes possible policy and

institutional transfers; élites first reflect on the necessity of 'Europeanisation' in order to adhere to a project of integration. This also means that Europe becomes a powerful symbol in the political field, and its interpretation potentially creates strong dividing lines between political actors. At least three general understandings of Europe can be identified: a reading of Europe as a story of economic prosperity and thus as a reference model for economic reform; an understanding of Europe as a political model of civil and political rights; and Europe as a model for organising social solidarity on a political level.

In part, the project of European integration can be understood as a defensive reaction to globalising tendencies and the erosion of the welfare state in the form of a viable regional market. In this understanding, 'Europe' would predominantly concern an economic and institutional project, following a logic of increased global economic competition. Another way of reading 'Europe', which may be at least partially compatible with the economic reading referred to above, is that it entails an ever increasing commitment to individualist liberalism. 'Europe' then is about the guaranteeing of civil rights and the limitation of governments in exercising their powers, a guarantee which is nowadays threatened by globalisation, to which the process of European integration provides a safeguard (Friese and Wagner n.d.). An emphasis on the protection of minority rights by the EU, as well as the European Council and the OSCE, seems to confirm such a commitment to the protection of individual rights in Europe, but also to go beyond it (cf. Brubaker 1996: 105-6).[244] A third reading of Europe is as holding out the promise of maintaining some level of social justice, as it was embodied by the European welfare state during 'les trentes glorieuses'. Europe is then not only about creating a common European market (through primarily negative integration, i.e., reducing regulations and restrictions on the movement of capital, goods, and persons, see Scharpf 1999), but also about preserving some level of social justice and cohesion in the face of individualising market forces (although in reality this mostly takes the form of a rearguard action, whereas positive integration in the form of common political projects on a European level proves hard to realise, Scharpf 1999).

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[244] At the same time, commitment to civil rights is not confined to the EU and can hardly be said to be an 'exclusively European goal' (cf. Friese and Wagner n.d.; Offe 2000: 19).

The EU holds out the promise of democratisation (an 'external anchor') for new members states, empirically founded on the consequences of the enlargement towards Southern Europe in the first half of the 1980s, and it is in this sense that Europe tends to be interpreted in Eastern Europe. Europe then constitutes a cultural and historical symbol for democracy, civil society, and human rights, an interpretation which accepts its signification as being formed by a long tradition of political liberalism, and the gradual (although at the same time strongly conflictual) expansion of democracy (cf. Friese and Wagner n.d.). As such, it provides a particular discursive symbol in the debates on modernisation and transition in Eastern Europe, and adherence to the idea of 'Europe' becomes a necessary confirmation of democratic credentials (cf. Schöpflin 2001: 110).

(Neo-)liberalism and 'Europe' as frames of reference in Eastern Europe

The adoption of (neo-)liberalism by political élites in the East-European post-communist context meant, above all, the expression of the desire for a radical and rapid rupture with the past. The neoliberal doctrine of the minimal state and the market as the solution to social problems constituted a radical systemic critique of the communist system, as in essence it entailed the exact opposite to the communist path to modernisation, which had been characterised by an absolute belief in the malleability of society 'from above' and a collectivist understanding of society. Neoliberalism in reality spelled anti-communism in its absolute rejection of any statist or organised project of modernisation - and therefore of any direct state interference in society – and its portrayal of the market as the natural condition of society and therefore any deviation from that condition as an aberration (cf. Crăiuțu 1998). These assumptions endowed neoliberalism in post-communist societies with a strong element of polarisation, dividing political forces between those that feared and those that promoted rapid change, especially since the neoliberal reform strategy was seen as a means of eliminating 'those interest groups that still occupied the institutions of the old regime' (Bönker *et al.* 2002: 6).

In its 'pure' form however, neoliberalism is unworkable as a strategy of transformation, even if it represents the most clear-cut representation of a model of capitalism, as it eschews any kind of hybridisation (Szacki 1995: 138, 151). The 'transition costs' and the tradition of egalitarianism under communism both point to the

necessity of adherence to some kind of social solidarity if the new modernisation project is not to founder in the face of widespread social critique and resistance (cf. Offe 1996; Stark and Bruszt 1998: 1-2)[245]. Furthermore, a market society cannot be constructed without a strong state that imposes privatisation and extensive economic reforms 'from above'[246], and at the same time must uphold some level of social protection and security. Moreover, neoliberalism as a political strategy provides the instruments to dismantle, or at least to re-organise the state, but as a political doctrine that provides answers as to how to build a new political order and how to integrate society around a new concept of collectivity, it is extremely limited. Neoliberalism thus proposes to create a new social order on the basis of individualism and market exchange, but has no real answer to questions of social well-being and collective belonging.

The failure of neoliberalism to provide convincing answers to both the national and the social questions was perhaps enhanced by its imported nature in post-communist Eastern Europe, just as communism had been in the 1940s. As such, it has few endemic roots in Eastern Europe, as the 'proto-liberalism' and 'anti-politics' that could be found in Poland and Hungary in the 1980s were only partly overlapping and also contained strongly divergent elements (such as the emphasis on civil society as a moral community instead of a community based on economic relationships, see Garton Ash 1989; Glasman 1994; Szacki 1995). Although there was an elective affinity between neoliberalism and those élites in Eastern Europe that were interested in a radical rupture with the communist order – in terms of the promises of greater freedom and the possibility of greater control and efficiency that neoliberalism offered (Eyal *et al.* 1998:

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[245] Furthermore, even the implementation of neoliberalism means that some kind of 'constructivism', against the pure nature of neoliberalism, is needed in a context of a highly ordered, hierarchised and controlled political system (Szacki 1995: 153-4).

[246] The tasks which the post-communist élites faced were not only those of creating the institutions of a market economy but also of producing or at least stimulating agency to behave according to the rules of a market society (Eyal *et al.* 1998: 98). Whereas in the West the major task of neoliberals was to free the market from the entanglements of the state, that is to say, creating deregulation through re-regulation, in Eastern Europe the project involved the actual creation of a market where it had not existed before. In practice, this has often led to the persistence of links between the state and the economy, for instance in privatisation funds and bargains between the state and managers of private firms (cf. Eyal *et al.* 1998).

90) neoliberal assumptions (individual responsibility and competitive, entrepeneurial behaviour) equally faced historically embedded social understandings with which it was not compatible, such as egalitarianism and collectivist, harmonious perceptions of society.[247] In sum, the political project of neoliberalism in Eastern Europe cannot be a project of merely 'rolling back the state' and re-establishing market relations where they had been absent. The dominant and 'tested' nature of the neoliberal model indicates an 'imperative' element, as the only alternative available, but it remains limited in its confrontation with larger society and political opposition. The real meaning of neoliberalism must therefore be understood in an 'interactionist' framework, that is, by identifying the political élites who promote it, the way they interpret it, and how they relate to competitors, such as the post-communists and nationalist forces (cf. Stark and Bruszt 1998).

Two potential answers to the national and social questions (that neoliberalism is incapable of confronting) can however be found in, on one the hand, nationalism, and, on the other, a strong reliance on European integration, as a (partial) substitute for local traditions of liberal individualism and democracy. In the latter case, 'Europe' embeds a collective, national identity in the wider framework of Europe, which is predominantly interpreted as a community of liberal values and norms (embodied in concepts such as 'civil society', 'human rights' and a 'Rechtsstaat'), and can therefore provide legitimation to those political forces that have pursued a pre-dominantly anti-communist project. Its commitment to individualist liberalism is, however, prone to be in tension with definitions employed by political opponents, who may denounce the perceived loss of national identity and sovereignty, as well as social solidarity that European accession brings in its wake.

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[247] Eyal *et al.* (1998) identify five forms of affinity between the 'monetarist technocrats' and the dissidents in Central European societies, i.e., the rejection of societal malleability, self-governance/responsibility of individuals, self-regulation or governance 'from afar', the rule of law, and the civilising role of intellectuals (1998: 95-9).

11.2 Discursive contestation over reforms in Romania[248]

Despite assertions to the contrary, at the moment that the old Communist regime broke down, the discursive space of modernising ideas in Romania was not completely void. On the one hand, the revolutionary forces (both masses and élites) immediately echoed slogans of freedom and popular sovereignty found elsewhere in the collapsing communist world, which despite their rather vague nature, clearly indicated some direction for radical change. On the other hand, the élites that controlled political power in the wake of the revolution themselves formulated a discourse, also relatively imprecise, but which similarly entailed an orientation for change, although it did reproduce many significant concepts from the former regime. The rupture constituted by the revolution was itself contested terrain, as some interpreted it as a complete break with the past system and the necessity to move away from the Communist regime and Ceauşescuism as quickly as possible ('down with communism'), whereas others understood the rupture to be less dramatic and as only entailing a regime change ('down with Ceauşescu').

Consequently, the revolution institutionalised two major modernising discourses in post-communist Romania, one revolving around a radical rupture with the immediate past and the (re-)establishment of a polity founded on popular sovereignty and individual freedom, the other ranging from an absolute denunciation of change to a milder conservatism favouring limited change (expressed in the re-articulation of concepts such as nation, social cohesion, and a strong state), although it also increasingly incorporated concepts indicating more radical changes (such as reform, market economy, privatisation, and European integration). These political discourses not only built on traditional concepts available in the domestic context, or on concepts derived from dominant discourses in the international sphere, but were interrelated. This reciprocity resulted both in an enduring polarisation between political forces, and in a selective incorporation of adversaries' concepts into one's own discourse.

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[248] This section draws on the extensive survey of political programs by Voicu and Voicu (1999), various political party programs and statements (in the form of speeches, articles and monographs) by members of political parties.

11.3 Discourses of limited change

The post-communists that dominated in post-1989 Romanian politics avoided a sustained and systemic critique of the Communist project, despite initial statements to the contrary. The discourse of the post-communists was above all characterised by the condemnation of the excesses of Ceauşescuism and a rehabilitation of what they saw as the true nature of communism (cf. Voicu 1993). The latter included the continuing commitment to a thick description of social bonds, based on social justice and equality, and the condemnation of alienation (the latter became increasingly visible in a vehement denunciation of 'anarchic liberalism', 'wild capitalism', and the negative consequences of marketisation). While the post-communists did admit to a profound social, political, and economic crisis, they interpreted it as a result of a crisis of state authority, not as one of 'etatism' as such (cf. Voicu and Voicu 1999: 592). In the early 1990s, their discourse could be characterised as 'revisionist socialism' (Adamson 2000), an approach that belatedly took issue with Stalinism and therefore pleaded for the gradual introduction of political and economic liberties. Nevertheless, the post-communists explicitly opposed the adoption of any vehement criticism (inherent in neoliberalism, or its East-European variant 'transitology') which condemned the politically oppressive features and the immanent inefficiency of any kind of state interventionism and recreated the 'pensée unique' in the East European context. The post-communists' adherence to a uniquely Romanian 'third way' was strengthened by the 'discursive alliance' formed from 1992 onwards (until 1995), with those political forces on the extreme left and right that not only opposed reforms but even favoured a return to the old system (cf. Voicu 1993: 7).

1. Cultural inspiration. If one places the post-communists' interpretation of modernisation into the context of the two main tendencies for understanding modernisation in the history of the Romanian modern state – on the one hand, traditionalism or particularism, and, on the other, occidentalism or westernism – one notices a disproportionate – in times of revolutionary changes - accentuation on the conservation of prior existing structures and institutions, and a persistent emphasis on the uniqueness of the Romanian situation and the need for the reproduction of this distinctness, in defiance of universal recipes for change.

The particularism that formed a predominant element in the national Communist project was primarily based on the promotion of national unity and cohesion, and thereby the suppression of domestic diversity. Secondly, national Communism was based on a vision of national sovereignty or self-determination, which strongly opposed universalism and supported a world vision based on the diversity and uniqueness of societies. National unity and sovereignty were formulated against the external threats of both Soviet imperialism and occidentalism. The inspiration or reference model for the early post-communist or social-democratic project was based predominantly on these concepts embedded in national traditions.

The post-communist project of the early 1990s contained two key elements. The preservation of national unity and social cohesion. Both of these concepts were articulated to oppose concepts that were raised by domestic oppositional forces as well as external observers. The post-communists reproduced the emphasis on national unity and cohesion in their populist project of conserving social cohesion and homogeneity against the diversifying and potentially disruptive effects of Western (neo-)liberalism and individualism. In addition, the national unitary state was to be protected against the potentially centrifugal forces of Hungarian separatism/irredentism as well as from the pluralist democratic opposition. Instead of a continuous renunciation of the egalitarianism and the radical and isolationist nationalism of the past - as both the internationally dominant neoliberal approach and the domestic opposition called for - these concepts were reintroduced by the post-communists. The second key element in the post-communist project was therefore the protection of national sovereignty, seen as the only way to secure national unity and continuous social cohesion. The embodiment of national sovereignty, first by the NSF and by later the PSDR, was articulated as a *conditio sine qua non* for the protection of the national interest and specific national values, whereas opposition parties were portrayed as threats to the nation and social equality. While opposition forces were promulgating universalist concepts of pluralist democracy, privatisation, and the market economy, the post-communists introduced alternative concepts, such as the social market economy and original democracy, based on both traditional particularism (the national value of homogeneity) and universalism (social justice).

The essentially isolationist and particularist strategy of the post-communists in the early 1990s (primarily formulated against the integrationist strategy of the domestic opposition) shifted towards a conception of modernisation into which some universalist concepts of the opposition were introduced, although always adapted to post-communist discourse.[249] The central tenets of national unity and social solidarity were coupled with the notions of European integration and post-industrial society as explicit objectives of the social-democratic programme. Authentic modernisation was defined as a combination of the 'fulfilment of the aspirations for freedom, democracy, social justice, solidarity and well-being', whereas 'national reconstruction' could only be achieved in simultaneous accordance with domestic demands for reform and evolutions elsewhere (Europe and the world) (PDSR 1997). Instead of renouncing foreign influence and putting the emphasis on the undermining potential of integration in international structures, the PSDR redefined Europe as a 'social Europe', which is 'not only founded on financial and monetary criteria, but also on the construction of an integrated market which is able to generate jobs and offer protection to the disadvantaged categories' (PDSR 1997).

In this way, its social-democratic doctrine could be presented as linking up with universal tendencies (in which the social role of the state is reconsidered), while simultaneously defending the national interest by correcting the erosive consequences of market society. Thus, where an unconditional opening up would expose Romania to the forces of globalisation which would heighten social polarisation and inter-ethnic conflict and therefore undermine national unity and social cohesion, the social-democratic doctrine offered a form of international integration whilst maintaining domestic levers of correction. Neoliberal models were considered as already outdated in

[249] Perhaps the most striking example of this is the assertion of the concept of 'participatory democracy' (*democrației participative*), adopted by the PDSR in 2000, which has evidently been formulated against the concept of civil society as endorsed by contending political forces (in particular the intellectualist Civic Alliance). Participatory democracy is defined as a shift of political activities towards citizens, groups, and local communities, with the endorsement of increased civic participation in public life. At the same time, the PSD reclaims the concept of civil society as necessarily representing the whole of society, instead of just 'a few élitist groups and circles' (PSD 2000b), thereby denouncing an intellectual domination of civil society and giving a popular interpretation to the concept.

the developed world, and therefore not worth repeating (PDSR 1997). Thus, the PSDR promoted the 'integration of Romania in the multifunctional structures of the developed world, considering that this represents today a natural framework for the affirmation of national identity and to keep the unitary character of the Romanian state' (PDSR 1997).

2. Political foundations. Post-communist discourse evolved from conservatism and populism, stressing stability and social reparation, and reformism of a social-democratic type (cf. Adamson 2000). Throughout the 1990s, the social democrats placed a continuous emphasis on a collectivist understanding of autonomy, rather than emphasising individual liberty (as its political opponents did). In political terms, the prominence of the collectivity in its modernising discourse was expressed in a call for 'national unity', 'national cohesion', original democracy', and the reference to internal and external threats to the Romanian nation (the first being embodied by the political opposition, the second by the 'Hungarian threat'), as well as a continuous reference to forms of social cohesion and social justice through a 'social market economy', a 'social state', and the avoidance of social polarisation.[250] Whereas the stress of national unity indicates the need to avoid any kind of division of the collectivity and therefore apparent weakness in the face of potential adversaries, the centrality of social cohesion and solidarity shows an imaginary of a strong embeddedness of the individual in the larger community, and, in turn, his or her dependence on the survival and flourishing of that community. In a historical sense, this collectivism reveals a continuity with the 'holist' perception of the nation, as an undifferentiated social whole, which was manifest in national Communism, Fascism and nationalist Liberalism. Likewise, the dominant interpretation of freedom in the post-communist/social-democratic project demonstrates a strong inclination towards this positive kind of freedom, i.e., a freedom

[250] The internal threat - the centre-right opposition - was accused of 'preparing the apocalyptic end of the country', 'destroying national wealth by restituting property to the big landowners', and thus favouring a particular social class instead of the national interest, and heightening social problems (unemployment, housing). The external threat to the nation - the Hungarian radicals – was seen by Iliescu as gaining particular prominence when the party of the Hungarian minority was about to join the centre-right governmental coalition, which in his opinion would lead to a federalisation of the country, organised by Hungarians and the opposition who betrayed the national interest (Iliescu's remarks in the second round of the presidential elections in November 1996, see Ştefănescu 1998: 257-8, see also PDSR 1999b).

that can only be realised when certain fundamental conditions are in place and which gives priority to a substantively defined common good rather than individual emancipation from oppressive state power.

Indeed, throughout the various party platforms of the social-democrats issued during the 1990s, there is a repeated reference to 'the common interests of all Romanian citizens', the necessity 'to correct the numerous social injustices inherited from the communist regime', the promotion of 'equality and social solidarity as principal values', 'to avoid division and polarisation of society', and the 'equality of chance' (see Voicu and Voicu 1999: 590-602; see also PDSR 1997, 1999a, 2000a). In its 1995 programme, the social-democrats stated: '[i]n the vision of the PDSR, equality is not an abstract concept, since one cannot realise the freedom of its fellow men if one does not assure their equality. For us, [equality] is related to the refusal of social polarisation, poverty and the limits on motivations and development, brought about by the inequality of income' (cited in: Voicu and Voicu 1999: 596-597). The collectivist interpretation of freedom is flanked by, or perhaps more accurately, understood within an interpretation of communal bonds that finds its basis in an ethnic, exclusivist definition of the nation. Such a perception is not universally shared by all those in the PSDR and has not always been expressed with equal force, but it has emerged often enough to be considered an important part of the party's discourse. This vision accentuates those communal bonds that are based on language, a shared history (and a certain reading of that history), and an ethnicity that invokes as a counter-image the Hungarian minority and others that are deemed to pose a threat to the unity of the Romanian people. As such, the social-democratic project can be seen as a continued commitment to the (as yet unrealised) collective self-determination of the Romanian ethnic majority.[251]

3. Socio-political practices. Despite the ostensible general consensus among the political forces in Romania on the direction of political reforms – i.e. the establishment of a democratic political system and party pluralism – the actual implications of such a

[251] In a statement issued in 1999, the PSDR affirmed that 'the only chance for our individual and collective existence is represented by the Romanian national state, unitary and independent. It is a sacred truth for all that our liberty is tied to Romanian sovereignty, while anything which causes damage to this belief and which aims at the dissolution of the Romanian state, with all its dramatic consequences, will meet with an immediate response by the PDSR' (PDSR 1999b).

choice have been evaluated rather differently by those same political forces. The post-communists have adhered from the beginning to the concept of democracy, without however making clear what was meant by this. From some of their more significant political actions and choices as well as from positions taken on crucial political issues however one can arrive at an understanding of their conception of democratic society. In particular in the early 1990s, the post-communists emphasised a vision of political society in which it was not so much the state that represented the various interests of civil society (and therefore constituted in its entirety an essentially neutral political body in which popular sovereignty was embedded), but rather it was the 'umbrella' or mass party which incorporated all national interests and represented the national interest as a unified and indivisible whole. This principle of national consensus is explained aptly by Vladimir Pasti:

> National consensus means that, beyond a group or personal interests, beyond any options, there is a unique solution, the best one, the solution imposed by reality if, assisted by technicians and specialists, one comes to know it well enough. This basic solution is just as inflexible and inexorable as the laws of gravitation. In order to stress its absolute character, it is considered as representing the national interest and, [as] nobody can rise against the national interest, a consensus emerges about it (Pasti 1997: 164).

In this perception, the post-communists were the interpreter of the common good, to which other parties and social forces could subscribe, but about which in essence no significant discussion was possible. Perhaps the most concise expression of this vision was to be found in Iliescu's concept of 'original democracy', which was to comprise all the political forces in the country and which was an extension in time of the unity embodied in the National Salvation Front, i.e., a 'unity of necessity' in the context of a profound political, economic and social crisis (Şerb 1994: 3; Blendea 1994: 6). Although the concept of 'original democracy' failed to rally the majority of the political forces behind it (as the opposition took strong issue with the concept), a diluted version of it – 'national consensus' - remained a part of the post-communists' vocabulary.[252]

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[252] In its 1997 program, the PSDR called for a new political and social consensus around the 'national objective' of 'modernisation and development of Romania' (PDSR 1997). Similar statements can be found in subsequent programs. In 1999, the PSDR called for the substitution of social confrontation and the dictate of shock therapy with dialogue and consensus (PDSR 1999c).

The tendency to view popular sovereignty as embodied in the post-communist mass party and much less so in the rules of the political system and political institutions was complemented by the party's claim to represent, in its essence, the Romanian majority, a pre-political community and an indivisible whole in itself, which could therefore be represented by a single ruling body.[253]

Modes of legitimation

The new political project initiated by the post-communists in 1990 was at first legitimised by the revolutionary credentials of the National Salvation Front (reference to which continued until the mid-1990s, see Iliescu 1995a, b; Voicu and Voicu 1999). This form of 'revolutionary' legitimacy was based on the formal re-instalment of popular sovereignty as the basis of political authority, and was thus in essence a denunciation of the arbitrary rule of the Ceauşescu-clan in favour of the procedural and impersonal legitimacy found in democratic political systems. However, partly because this 'revolutionary legitimacy' quickly wore thin as a result of contradictory political actions and the highly visible gap between the pronounced rupture with the former order and its continued existence in real terms, the post-communists introduced others forms of legitimacy. They started out with a form of populist nationalism, defending egalitarianism, social cohesion and national unity, thereby pre-empting widespread anxiety about socio-economic deterioration as well as the loss of national sovereignty in the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet empire. In the first instance, this populist nationalism invoked traditional legitimacy, in the sense that post-communists tried to preserve norms and traditions that formed an intrinsic part of the former regime. At the same time, these values constituted the core of the new project and therefore equally invoked a 'goal-rational form' of legitimation, identifying the substantive goals of the new project and making them an integral part of their model of the future societal order. Nevertheless, critique from both the domestic opposition and international actors of these values undermined their legitimating merit, by pressing for the introduction of

[253] Iliescu, other members of the post-communist party, and most vigorously the radical nationalist parties frequently denied the right of the Hungarian ethnic minority to invoke regional 'ethnic autonomy' in Transylvania as this would allegedly lead to the dismemberment of the Romanian unitary state and thus go against the national interest.

elements of rational-legal legitimacy, i.e. by seeking to enhance efficiency in the economy as well as diffusing impersonal norms in state structures. In spite of this criticism, the post-communists-turned-social-democrats retained the predominance of values such as social cohesion in their political project, by becoming ever closer in appearance to European social democrats, they invoked a form of derived legitimacy.[254]

Strategic-institutional objectives

It was not only in politico-philosophical, conceptual terms but also in political-strategic ones that post-communist discourse increasingly comprised integrationist, universalist arguments, without however shedding the original main tenets of national unity and social solidarity.

1. Societal progress. In a sense, one could say that the post-communists denied the need for (systemic) transformation. Soon after the changes in 1989 the post-communists began to stress stability and social equilibrium as the primary objectives of their project, thereby negating the need for a complete dismantling of state and societal structures. Two observations with regard to their understanding of socio-economic progress can be made. First of all, the emphasis on social solidarity and stability signified a rather direct continuity with the communist period. The primacy of such objectives identified a centralised and interventionist state as the main actor in organising and sustaining socio-economic progress. Only through the continued action of the state could social cohesion be guaranteed (in the face of the disruptive forces of the post-communist transition) and general welfare be maintained. In this sense, according to the post-communists, it was exactly the (partial) suppression of pluralism and differentiation that would enable the Romanian economy to weather the storm of transition and preserve the national interest. The second observation regards then the primarily collectivist understanding of socio-economic progress and its affinity with a homogeneous, unitary understanding of the nation. In contrast to neoliberal visions of the generation of general welfare through the

[254] As the current prime minister Adrian Năstase has put it: 'The political configuration of contemporary Europe is much more than a conjuncture, it is proof of a unity of belief which defines Europeans. From this point of view, the Romanian electorate has demonstrated that it has already entered Europe, in view of the majority's choice for a party which defends social-democratic values' (cited in: Cernat 2001).

actions of detached individuals, the post-communists emphasised the need to prevent social division and polarisation, to collectively sustain an effort to realise social cohesion. Such arguments against the 'chaos' and 'anarchy' of liberalism hold strong affinities with the historically embedded argument for a 'national unitary state', the aim of which was to secure national wealth for the Romanians as a collectivity.

2. Collective self-determination. The post-communist programme of modernisation evolved around the preservation of national unity and the promotion of the national interest. In this sense, a good part of the party's political behaviour was related to the prevention of the (perceived) disintegration of the traditional Greater Romanian state as formed in 1918 (although the retrieval of Moldova was never particularly high on the political agenda). The post-communist party connected the national interest and national unity with the preservation of the 'national unitary state'. Thus, preservation meant leaving intact the centralised, unitary Romanian state. In the early 1990s, the PSDR regarded this purpose as best served by the relative isolation of Romania from the integrationist and liberal trends followed elsewhere in Eastern Europe. This strategy, which partly continued the collectivist and isolationist arguments of national Communism, was redefined from 1993 onwards, when integration into Euro-Atlantic structures was acknowledged as a policy objective. The shift from an isolationist to an integrationist stance did however not undermine the fundamental attachment to the national unitary state. Integration was primarily perceived in a formal, legal sense, serving the purpose of securing international recognition of Romanian national sovereignty. The substantive domestic policy goals implied in Euro-Atlantic integration (such as the decentralisation of state power) were to a far lesser degree part of the post-communist vision.

3. Political representation and control. While the denunciation of the tyranny of the communist regime was deemed an integral part of the revolution of 1989, the approach of the NSF and later the PSDR towards democracy, pluralism, and the autonomy of society remained ambiguous. In the early 1990s, the idea of the obsoleteness of political parties was suggested, while large-scale mass movements were deemed fully 'modern', thereby renouncing the particularism of the historical parties and acclaiming the positive and dynamic character of the NSF (Pavel and Huiu 2003: 28-9). At various points, the PSDR proposed the necessity of a national consensus behind the crucial objectives of

modernisation and economic development, apparently favouring socio-economic reforms over political debate and reform.[255]

In spite of the lost legitimacy of étatist socialism and in defiance of the minimalist conception of the state outlined in neoliberalism, the post-communists pursued a 'maximalist' vision of the state throughout the 1990s. The post-communists promoted an interventionist state whose primary role was to guarantee social solidarity, equality and to avoid social polarisation by mitigating the social consequences of economic reforms (cf. Năstase 2001: 101-2; Voicu and Voicu 1999). Instead of following the neoliberal discourse of the minimal state (as often happened elsewhere in Eastern Europe), the post-communists promoted a maximum state, characterised by a powerful, paternalistic government with a dominant role in the economy. In principle, the post-communists followed the same path as elsewhere in that they promoted a retreat of the 'patronage state' from society, both in a political sense, through the simultaneous circumscription of the powers of the state and the guarantee of human and civil rights in the constitution, and in an economic sense, through the reduction of the state's role in the economy by means of privatisation and the creation of a legal framework for a relatively autonomous market.

Notwithstanding this formally acknowledged necessity of the withdrawal of the state, the post-communists' vision of the state went beyond the limited idea of the dual role of the state, i.e. as both the guarantor of a civil sphere and as the immanently value-free place where popular sovereignty was located. In the post-communist perception, the state was to actively interfere in society, so as to guarantee the ends of social solidarity and justice, and to prevent social polarisation. The post-communists therefore placed social responsibility at the state level, in sharp contrast with the neoliberal vision which places social responsibility at the individual level (or, alternatively, at the meso-level of civil society). The post-communists diagnosed the post-1989 situation as a 'crisis of identity of civil society, of social groups and individuals, marked by a political disorientation and the weakening confidence in norms and moral values', in conjunction with the emergence of various social problems, all of which were accentuated in a

[255] In its 1997 program for instance the PSDR claims that Romania is already a constitutional state, with mature and consolidated democratic institutions, and since political pluralism is a fact, this forecloses any further debate on democratic quality (PDSR 1997: 3).

'crisis of the authority of the state' (cited in: Voicu and Voicu 1999: 592, 595, 596; see also PSD 2000a).

A primary solution to all this has been identified by the post-communists in a recovered authoritative state, defined as a 'social state', which 'within the functioning of the mechanisms of the market economy, seeks to satisfy the social needs of classes and social groups, particularly of those less favoured', having the right to 'prevent and correct social distortions created by an uncontrolled economic development' (cited in: Voicu and Voicu 1999: 592, 595). In other words, the social state as a 'national institution of solidarity' is to promote the primary values of equality, social solidarity and cohesion (PSD 2000a).

In tension with the predominant statist and paternalist tendency, however, was the essential role the post-communists attributed to privatisation from 1993 onwards. In this they introduced a crucial (neo-)liberal concept into their reform discourse - the acceptance of a (gradual) withdrawal of the state - without however discarding the main concepts of a 'social state' and a 'social market economy' (cf. Voicu and Voicu 1999: 595). In 1996, the party went as far as to call for an acceleration of privatisation, whereas in 1997 the perceived role of the state was transformed into one guaranteeing a framework for the development of society. In this adapted version of the state, direct intervention is restricted to the stimulation of the private sector, although indirect intervention to prevent polarisation is still envisaged[256] (Voicu and Voicu 1999: 599-601; PSDR 1997; PSD 2000a; Năstase 2001: 113-114).

11.4 Discourses of radical change

The discourses of radical change and against post-communist continuity were mainly articulated in Romania by two opposition groups, the re-established 'historical parties' – the National Liberal Party and the National Peasant Party – and the newly formed civic-liberal party, the CAP. The opposition's perception of modernisation can therefore be understood as largely being based on two currents of thought, i.e. (neo-)liberalism in its various guises and christian-democracy (cf. Gabanyi 1998). The opposition represented those parties that formulated a critique of the Communist project on a systemic level,

[256] The 1997 program thus referred to the need for both the principles of economic efficiency and social protection, denouncing radical solutions to economic reforms (PDSR 1997).

therefore eschewing any kind of continuity with the immediate past and strongly opposing the forces pursuing the status quo.

1. Cultural inspiration. As already mentioned, the coalition's 'essential objective' was 'to detach completely from communism'. The identification of communism as an externally imposed anomaly underpinned the coalition claim for a return to the 'spiritual traditions of responsibility, tolerance, and enlightened patriotism, which have laid the basis for the modern Romanian state' (CDR 1992: 529). Here, the anti-communist project was directly linked with pre-communist Liberal-nationalist traditions of modernisation, which in themselves had been based on the emulation of the West. Furthermore, there was a close affinity between the anti-communism of the coalition and the internationally dominant (neo-)liberalism promulgated by international institutions and experts. Both hinged on a suspicion of the state and (political and economic) interference in society. Against the particularist tendencies in the post-communist project, the democratic coalition promulgated a universal conception of democracy and of the market economy. As mentioned above, the opposition's conception of politics was directly formulated as a reaction to the post-communist concept of 'original democracy', and was defined as the 'real' or 'authentic' conception of democracy, as it followed Western standards (cf. Verdery 1996: 112). The (re-)introduction of democracy in Romania was perceived as the re-affirmation of a long historical trend of Europeanisation and democratisation.[257] In a similar vein, post-communist concepts such as the 'social market economy' were criticised for their prolongation of communist centralism and their evasion of the unquestionable necessity of establishing capitalism.[258] For an economic transformation to be successful, the necessary liberal institutions - found in all advanced economies and therefore having a 'tested' nature - had to be adopted.

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[257] The opposition presidential candidate, Emil Constantinescu, formulated this as follows in his election program: 'The experience of older generations shows us that, under a intelligent and generous government, the Romanians have succeeded in transforming the country, in some decennia, from a rural province, poor and non-significant, into a modern and democratic state' (Constantinescu 1996). Similarly, the CAP, in one of its statutes, identified two possible directions for Romania, Bolshevist Asiatism or Western, European standards. According to the CAP, Romania had already belonged to Europe by virtue of its traditions, since 1848 (Verdery 1996: 116).

[258] See, for instance, Şerbănescu (1993: 13): 'To look for a third way is a chimera'.

The almost unconditional adoption of Western, allegedly universally valid concepts and models created in itself tensions between the logics innate in these models. One of these tensions was the consequence of the invocation of liberal notions such as 'tolerance', 'social dialogue', and the necessity of the state to refrain from giving moral direction to citizens' lives.[259] The approach towards politics inherent in these notions, i.e., the acceptance of an inherent measure of conflict and difference of opinion in society, and the understanding of politics as being based on institutionalised conflict, was in potential contradiction with the strong emphasis on the vision of the state as representing first and foremost the Romanian ethnic majority, thus a form of particularism. The latter re-introduced a particularist, substantive value into politics, which was often understood as preceding any other consideration. In a similar vein, an undiluted adherence to the primacy of the economy as found in the neoliberal model is potentially in tension with the upholding of the values of a particular community and the national interest.

2. Political foundations. The democratic coalition denounced the continuity of any statist project as an impediment to the emancipation of the individual, whose freedom was seen as the most crucial element in the transformation to a new societal order. The need for negative liberty was strongly emphasised, through the 'guarantee of individual liberty' and 'the inviolable right of individual property', which were considered the basis of individual and general welfare. The National Liberal Party, for instance, understood the crisis of the state as the result of the lack of consideration for the fundamental rights of citizens, the lack of curtailment of state power, and the overwhelming presence of the state in society. Therefore, the first priority was to effect the retreat of the state from society in order to create a 'real democracy', based on individual property rights and free competition in a free market economy (Voicu and Voicu 1999: 617). Modernisation was seen as the confirmation of the primacy of the individual in society, and the crucial role of a middle class and free initiative in a stable new order.

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[259] In the 1992 program of the CDR the following was asserted: 'The state should not be obliged to assure, automatically and by whatever means, the wellbeing of its citizens. It has the duty to offer the necessary protection and conditions so that single [individuals] can create themselves a decent life, according to their own values and their own labour' (CDR 1992: 531).

Instead of promulgating a paternalistic and protective state (as the post-communists did), the democratic coalition underlined the repressive features of the state and argued strongly for the protection of the citizen against the abuses of state power (see, for instance, AC 1990a, b). The abuse of power was not only to be protected through a legally embedded constitutional state, but was furthermore to be based on a strong distinction between the state and (civil) society. The latter 'reunites all forms of social life independent from the state, the central and local administrations' (CDR 1992: 530). Moreover, the absence of civil society was the premise on which dictatorship and poverty were based. In the CDR's definition of civil society, political liberalism and democracy were explicitly linked with economic liberalism: 'Civil society means: the exercise of individual and collective liberties, the unrestricted exercise of human rights, the opening of democracy to public life, the encouragement of private property, the accelerated privatisation of state property, [and] all the elements necessary for the ensurance of a profitable economy, of the prosperity of every citizen and every family' (CDR 1992: 530). Furthermore, the CDR holds that 'private property is the indispensable condition for the authentic expressivity of a human person' (CDR 1992: 541), and similarly promoted liberal individualism as a primary element in modernisation, placing the liberal individual within a civil sphere that needs to be protected from state interference. Civil society was further the sphere in which the individual finds common values and social solidarity as 'the guarantee of liberty and democracy can not be offered other than by the consolidation of civil society in its relationship with the state' (cited in: Cristea 1993: 9; see also Voicu and Voicu 1999: 625-6).

The opposition shared the 'totalitarian', political critique of communist society, in which the main problem of communism is identified as statist intrusion in all spheres of society. In most post-communist societies the remedy to this was found in the adoption of a neoliberal strategy of retreat by the state from public life and the strict curtailment of the state's powers and duties, in order to effect a shift away from a concentration of power in the state towards a much larger degree of autonomy invested in society. Indeed, in the CAP's vision of modernisation, the resolution of the crisis of civil society is of prime importance, a crisis which manifests itself in a condition of apathy and a lack of involvement of the citizen in resolving societal problems (Voicu and Voicu

1999: 623). The primary objective of modernisation was thus less collective autonomy and independence from external interference than the emancipation of the individual in relation to the state, and the belief that such an emancipation would lead to the best possible realisation of the common good. This position brings with it a different view of the individual itself who should embody responsibility, willingness to cooperate and solidarity with fellow citizens.

3. Socio-political practices. The post-communist programme for modernisation put substantive objectives - the national interest and social solidarity - at the forefront. The pursuit of these objectives allegedly legitimised an interventionist state as well as restricted political reform. For their part, the democratic coalition interpreted this programme as an unmistakable sign of conservatism. As the democratic coalition held as its primary objective the complete eradication of communism from society[260], it needed to formulate a radical political programme proposing mechanisms through which the communist societal logic could be undone and an alternative societal order be constructed. In many ways, the coalition found such a programme in what I above labelled the dominant discourse of neoliberalism. In both an economic and political sense, the coalition proposed the rebuilding of order on the basis of legal-rational, procedural norms as the most effective means to counter the collectivism, state repression, alleged illusions of the malleability of society, and inefficiency of communism (both in its pre-1989 form and in its supposed reincarnation, the PSDR).

The main conceptual argumentations of the democratic coalition regarded: a. a constitutional and minimal state, b. a strict separation between the state and (civil) society, and, c. the creation of an autonomous economic society. Regarding the state and political rule, the concepts of an 'authentic democracy' and the 'constitutional state' were counterposed to the post-communist concept of 'original democracy'. The concept of authentic democracy underlined the need for the subjugation of the state to diverse societal interests and unrestricted popular influence in politics; the constitutional state and its division between powers and legal, procedural workings were proposed to

[260] The 1992 program of the CDR reads: 'The essential objective is to take down communism completely, through clarifying consciousness and changing mentality, through rebuilding the constitutional state, stimulating the economy and assuring social security, through reintegrating national territory, and reintegrating Romania into the European circuit' (CDR 1992: 529).

counter arbitrary state power, the manipulation of the state by singular interests, and illegitimate state intervention in society. Similarly, with regard to the economy, the 'omnipotent and paternalistic state' which characterised both communism and post-communism needed to be replaced by a state that was merely a 'partner to civil society' (Cristea 1993: 9).

State-society relations needed drastic transformation according to the democratic coalition. The insistence on the state and the establishment of (civil) society as a *sine qua non* for a successful transformation was based on two kinds - political and economic - of reasonings. First of all, the state as such was deemed a symbol of inertia, conservatism, oppression, and the communist past, whereas civil society represented dynamism and change. Because it was not in the state's interest to downsize itself, only the direct representation of civil society (outside of the state) could serve society's own interests. From this it followed that an omnipresent state would stifle society, impeding the latter's natural inclination towards responsibility and autonomy (cf. Tănase 1993: 7). The crisis in post-communist Romania was not merely related to the excesses of the Ceauşescu tyranny but to the suppression of society that flowed from the communist system itself. The withdrawal of state from society was then a necessary condition for the re-emergence of authentic values and for society to function properly.[261] As communism had created a 'new man' who had lost religious faith and belief in his fellowmen, a new societal project needed to reverse this trend and recreate authentic values of responsibility and tolerance.

The democratic coalition therefore put great emphasis on human and civil rights, and on the creation of a civic sphere in which fundamental rights were protected from state interference. The second underlying reasoning that demonised the state and favoured independent societal forces was of an economic nature. Thus, the political and economic arguments were linked by their identification of civil society as the only possible basis of a real transition. Here, the argument ran that only the absolute guarantee of private property would free society from oppression as it was the only way to limit state interference in the economy (the political argument ran parallel to this but was not the same: it emphasised the need to create institutions for the popular control of the state).

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[261] Thus the CDR pleaded for the 'moral resurrection of the nation through the return to the fundamental values of liberty, rights, solidarity, and faith' (CDR 1992: 530).

Private property constituted the origin of citizen autonomy and responsibility and was expected to release forces of entrepeneurialism and competition that would ultimately benefit general welfare.[262]

Modes of legitimation

The democratic coalition primarily invoked a derived mode of legitimation in its claim to political authority. Its programme of modernisation predominantly referred to Europeanisation/Westernisation, that is integration into Western structures, and the emulation of Western models and institutions. In this way, the coalition invoked derived legitimacy by referring to the 'tested nature' and universal validity of these models. In order to gain local relevance, these models needed to be locally embedded by means of their evident applicability to local problems and exigencies. The anti-communists claimed this relevance by utilising the logic of formal-legal rationality in its struggle against alleged communist continuity. Anti-communism was equated with the transparency, impersonal functioning, and legal justice of the constitutional state, which was counterposed to the arbitrary, corrupt, and opaque nature of the post-communist authority. Formal-legal rationality was therefore given an explicit function in the conflict over political authority and the right pathway to transition. In addition, the anti-communist coalition referred to its own democratic and Europeanist roots in Romanian history, invoking a form of traditional legitimacy in a project, attempting to break decisively with the immediate past. Communism was regarded as an anomaly in the country's history, whereas the preceding, Europeanist tradition was identified as the true Romanian tradition.[263] In this way, the re-established historical parties could claim to be the heirs of the 'authentic' traditions of democracy, whereas the post-communists were clearly the inheritors of the nefarious communist regime (cf. Pavel and Huiu 2003: 104).

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[262] Here, arguments for democracy and an economic market economy were often explicitly linked: 'There does not exist any alternative for a democratic party but to sustain the private sector' (Tănase 1993: 7).

[263] See footnote 255.

Strategic-institutional objectives

The institutional programme of the anti-communist coalition directly confronted the alleged institutional continuity of the post-communists, founding its institutional strategy to a large extent on integration into Western structures.

1. Societal progress. The socio-economic proposals of the democratic coalition reveal a strong adherence to the logic of differentiation and government 'from afar'. Through the creation of a distinct societal sphere, the market economy or civil society (which in the coalition's understanding seems to add up to the same thing), and the creation of autonomous economic agents, the middle class, a virtuous circle is created. 'Only economic liberalism, with which initiative and entrepeneurial spirit are associated, will take the place of completely counterproductive egalitarian collectivism and statist paternalism' (Şerbănescu 1993: 2). The market economy is expected to generate not only general welfare through the entrepeneurial and competitive behaviour of individuals, but also to provide the best means for social protection (through the institution of private property and the institutions of civil society). Many crucial aspects of the transformation are then expected to be resolved in the market economy. Among these are the economic restructuring of former state enterprises, the creation of employment and domestic capital, and the emergence of a motivated and responsible work force (cf. Tănase 1993).

2. Collective self-determination. The conception of collective self-determination or autonomy of the democratic coalition was formulated against what was deemed a form of prolonged tyranny of post-communism. Against the strategy of national consensus promulgated by the post-communists, the democratic coalition proposed the effective implementation of the ideals of the December revolution. These ideals comprised two related issues: internally, the effective shift of power from the state and its institutions to the people, and, externally, the discontinuation of Romania's isolation from the West. With regard to the first ideal, i.e., popular sovereignty, the coalition proposed various formal, institutional modes of strengthening the influence of the people on politics. The most important aspect of their claim to 'authentic democracy' was the demand for effective parliamentary rule, in which all the legislative powers would belong to the parliament (thus diminishing excessive presidential powers). In addition, the strict separation of political powers was called for, something that was seen as insufficiently

dealt with in the constitution of 1991. As I have indicated above, along with political-institutional reforms the coalition was a fierce supporter of the development of an 'extra-parliamentary' civil society and a participatory democracy (this was in particular espoused by the CA and the CAP). In political-strategic terms, the calls for the effective establishment of a constitutional state and against a continued 'party-state' were in concomitance with the coalition's demand for the purification of politics from the former Communist nomenklatura and members of the Securitate.

With regard to the second ideal, the decisive integration of Romania into the European and international orders, the coalition continuously pleaded an integrationist strategy, i.e., the rapid integration of Romania into the Euro-Atlantic and European structures. The integrationist strategy was to fulfil three of the coalition's primary objectives. The coalition regarded international integration as a complementary way of strengthening internal civil and human rights and the democratic system. In this sense, the adherence to international standards was tantamount to the emulation of a political model. Secondly, in a geo-political sense, integration into NATO would guarantee national security and stability, thereby preventing potential claims on Romanian national territory. Thirdly, integration into the European and world economy would best serve Romanian national economic prosperity. The last two points reveal that the coalition's strategy - just as the post-communist one - evolved to an important extent around the notion of national interest. Whereas the post-communists in the early 1990s regarded an isolationist course as the best way to preserve territorial integrity and economic prosperity, the democratic coalition countered this idea with an 'internationalist' strategy which was considered much more effective in promoting the national interest (see Verdery 2000: 90-1).

3. Political representation and control. The democratic coalition's programme of modernisation comprised two 'logics' with regard to political and socio-economic spheres. In politics, as mentioned above, the coalition promulgated above all the establishment of a constitutional state. In institutional terms, this meant not only the strict separation between legislative, executive and judiciary powers, but also the reduction of an oversized, centralised state. According to the coalition, the logic of the state should be reduced to one of protection of the constitution and the law. Its functions were to be minimised to administrative, diplomatic, and military functions and the

assurance of social protection (CDR 1992: 530). Moreover, an explicit point in the coalition's programme was decentralisation and local administration, increasing the scope for increasing local autonomy and diversity (CDR 1992: 531, 535).

In a similar vein, in the economic sphere the state needed to be confined to the essential functions of regulation and the guaranteeing of the market economy and private property. In sharp contrast to the post-communist conception of the state as a social state, the democratic coalition proposed a form of minimal state. The main difference between the two conceptions is the endorsement (or not) of the malleability of society. The minimalist conception of the state strongly doubts any possibility of shaping society 'from above' and therefore proposes a 'contextual' state rather than an interventionist one.[264] In contrast to the post-communist programme, the coalition pleaded for a substantial shift of initiative for action from the state to society. Such a shift could only be successful if an actual basis for societal autonomy was created, i.e., private property. In marked contrast with the post-communist economic outlook, the coalition pleaded for a 'profound' kind of privatisation which would strongly reduce the presence of the state in the economy and would ensure competition and efficiency in the entire economy. The coalition argued for the 'progressive elimination of all constraints on the formation, development and functioning of the private sector' (CDR 1992: 542). 'Profound' privatisation also meant that property nationalised during the communist period was in principle eligible to be restituted, including agricultural land. As in the neoliberal paradigm, the elevation of the market economy as the prime solution for social problems and general welfare was endorsed by all opposition parties. According to the NLP, it was therefore necessary to create a minimal state, in which 'primary incomes are the basis for individual welfare and have to be obtained to a much larger extent through free activity in the market economy', whereas the redistribution of

[264] In the democratic coalition, the party that positioned itself on the centre-left and had promulgated a strongly social outlook in the early 1990s stated the following in its 1997 program: 'social-democracy has renounced the illusion that governmental intervention can ameliorate the market mechanism, transforming it from imperfect into ideal. The market needs to be left to produce wealth' (cited in: Voicu and Voicu 1999: 613). The NLP pleaded for a 'minimal state, without an active role, whose actions need to be "reduced to the impediment of the violation of laws" ' (Voicu and Voicu 1999: 619).

incomes was to be carried out on the basis of a criterium of stringent necessity (Voicu and Voicu 1999: 620). The state was therefore to gradually retreat from the economy and renounce any active economic role, whereas a strong market economy was to enhance modern state capacities (Voicu and Voicu 1999: 620). In principle, state involvement in the economy ('dirigism') was viewed by the Liberals as potentially damaging for society and therefore the principal role of the state was to allow the smooth functioning of the market and economic enterprise (Cristea 1993: 9). Not only was the reduction of the role of the state deemed essential, so too was an increasing rationalisation of state activities and increasing decentralisation. Despite the consensus on the neoliberal assumptions of a minimal state[265], the crucial role of a 'transitory state' in reforms was acknowledged, as the transformation of a totalitarian order in itself creates the need for a non-societal, neutral actor to create the contours of a new society. The radical reduction of the state to key functions as described in the concept of a 'minimal state' did not, therefore, mean the proposal of a weak, non-interventionist state. This was not the case as, in the first place, a 'transitory state' was deemed necessary to correct for the social consequences of the transition. In the second place, because reducing the size of the state could not be carried out without the intervention of the state itself. Thirdly, a strong, even if minimal, state was needed to guarantee the functioning of the market.

[265] The christian-democratic party initially underlined a more significant role for the state in the functioning of public services and social protection, but by 1996 a much more reduced role of the central state in favour of the private economy and local government was endorsed (Voicu and Voicu 1999: 637).

Conclusions

Even if the definition of modernisation used in this study – as political projects aiming at the reconstruction of the socio-political order on the basis of the idea of human autonomy - is not shared by the reader, and in consequence, my treatment of particular discourses and political projects as inherently modern is contested, the historical-empirical analysis of Romania's experience with modernity should anyhow lead to the questioning of the equation of modernisation with Westernisation or Europeanisation as well as to scepticism towards assumptions of convergence. It should have become evident that, first of all, modernisation and the interpretation of modernity is less of a homogeneous and universal experience than assumed in the notions of convergence and singularity of modernity, and, secondly, that any particular experience with modernity is circumscribed by the historical-situational confrontation between (constellations of) actors, paradigmatic external reference points, and internal traditions, interpretations, and exigencies.

The Romanian experience with modernity

The analysis of the genesis of modernity in the Romanian principalities reveals that the original Romanian modern experience differed significantly from the Western one. Rather than consisting of either a more or less faithful emulation of Western modernity or a complete rejection, the particular constellation of actors that emerged as modernisers combined elements from both the rational, liberal model and the alternative vision of romanticism. The nineteenth-century origins of Romania's experience with modernity are significant and constitutive of later understandings and political projects in two ways.

First, the project of nation-building and state-formation that dominated much of the 19th century institutionalised a modern society in which the autonomy of the cultural-linguistic collectivity was predominant. In other words, independence and autonomy as political concepts evolved around the Romanian nation as a reified, supra-individual entity whose existence and development were the primary objectives of the modern state. The cultural-linguistic collective constituted the main constituent of the political

project for the modernisation of the Romanian Principalities. It informed the idea of independence (independence of the Romanians as a specific *nation*), the idea of unity between two (or three) prior separated territories, and the primary basis for the establishment of the boundaries, membership, and objectives of the new, modern nation-state.

Second, the first political project of modernisation – national-Liberalism – brought forth the crystallisation of the two major understandings of modernity in Romania: universalism or emulationism and particularism or indigenism. Although both perceptions were themselves open for different interpretations and, moreover, never exhausted the discourse of a particular modernising élite, they almost unfailingly constituted the ultimate reference points. During the nineteenth century, one could therefore speak of the institutionalisation of discursive traditions of modernity, which have been embedded in local culture and have been continuously reproduced as well as altered through time.

If the nineteenth-century political project of national-Liberalism is read in a strictly modernist way, its failure to cause an absolute break with the past would have to be understood as a failure to introduce modernisation as such. The absence of a revolution that disrupts the presence from the past and is subsequently institutionalised in structures, which unmistakably inhabit the modern, would preordain such a political project from its very beginning. In contrast, in this study my aim has been to detect the modern in the non-modern, and to juxtapose different understandings of modernisation with the Western archetype. Read in such a way, the origins of Romanian modernisation show a different image. The national–Liberal project was indeed based on a combination of traditional, particularist and universal, Europeanist elements, but this fact neither precluded its modern nature, nor supposed a gradual disappearance of traditional elements under pressure of universal, modern ones. What makes the origins of Romanian modernisation relatively distinct is the fact that its first experience with modernity was based on a collectivist understanding of the subject of modernisation, rather than an individual one. In other words, a cultural-linguistic collectivism was constitutive of its conception of modernisation, rather than Western individualism.

The dual foundations of this understanding – liberalism and romanticism – resulted in a form of particularist universalism in which the archetypal elements of modernisation – rationalisation, civil and political rights, bureaucratisation and state-formation – were subsumed under the primary objective of national unification and independence. Instead of renouncing the past as such, in Romanian Liberalism a reconsideration of tradition took place, in which elements from the past were selected that served as the basis for the construction of a modern society. Thus, '[L]ooking at tradition as at a mere break is tantamount to ignoring major aspects of modernization which appeared precisely as a result of the confrontation between the wish to renovate and the wish not to waste the intellectual experience amassed along the centuries' (Duțu 1981: 180). In other words, rather than to understand the central place of the Daco-Roman nation in the national-Liberal programme as a residual factor of tradition, it should be regarded as both a reaction to the potential engulfment of Romania by either universalistic Western modernity or by surrounding empires, and as a particular understanding of the concept of self-rule and emancipation.

I have argued that two main deviations of the nineteenth-century Romanian project of modernisation with Western modernity can be discerned. First of all, the predominant attention for the emancipation of the denied nation from foreign tyranny instead of the liberation of the oppressed individual from the despotic ruler and the interference of religion. This also entailed that a complete rupture with the old order was a less important preoccupation than the retrieval of earlier existing rights and the bringing to full development of the collectivity. Secondly, instead of promulgating a political order purely based on legal norms and procedural rules against the nefarious influence of arbitrary absolutist rule or religion, the Romanian nation-state was founded on the substantive notion of the nation, thereby creating a state which had as its primary mission the protection and development of the nation. The outlook of the modernising élites in nineteenth-century Romania shows strong affinity with Brubakers' concept of 'nationalising states', i.e., 'states that are conceived by their dominant élites as nation-states, as states of and for particular nations, yet as "incomplete" or "unrealized" nation-states, as insufficiently "national" in a variety of senses' (Brubaker 1996: 79). As elaborated in chapter 4 and 5, the Liberal nationalist project contained important general features of such a 'nationalising state'. In political-institutional terms, the Liberals'

main objective was to assure an internationally recognised, 'constitutionally independent' nation-state, the guarantee of state power and economic resources and activities in Romanian hands (for instance through the denial of citizenship and property rights to non-Romanians), and the creation of a stable internal order which was invulnerable to internal contestation (primarily of the peasantry) and external interference. In terms of socio-economic structures, the Liberal project was to a large extent about the gaining of absolute control over both economic resources and activities by ethnic Romanians. Listian policies and in the 1920s and 30s attempts at autarchy ('prin noi înşine') served the purpose of state control over the key roles and resources in the Romanian economy.

It is important to keep in mind that the Liberal project not merely entailed the instrumental usage of the state for purposes of class interest but that elements in its programme went beyond such considerations in promoting political rights for all Romanians, the unification of all Romanians in one state, and in its visions of amelioration of the common good through education and wide-scale socio-economic development. In addition, the Liberal project promulgated as its most significant objective the emancipation of the Romanian nation as such, an imaginary that not only was widely accepted as an objective, but could also be invoked against liberalism as a project.

From a modernist and in particular an economic determinist perspective, the fascist reaction to liberal modernity can either be understood as a purely anti-modern, reactionary movement in which the main tenets of modernisation – rationalisation, democratisation, and industrialisation – are refuted, or as a partially modern phenomenon, i.e. a project in which some modern aspects are incorporated, in particular regarding industrialisation and economic development, but which overall ran counter to or were in tension with the overall anti-modern intentions of fascists (see Herf 1983). Only recently more balanced accounts of the fascist 'revolt against modernity' have been proposed that go beyond normative and/or economic, determinist interpretations of modernity and indicate modern aspects in fascist movements which reveal a complex relation with and alternative interpretation of modern society rather than an absolute refutation (see, in particular, Eisenstadt 1999; 2000). It is from the latter perspective that

I have considered the emergence of Romanian Fascism and have interpreted its significance for the Romanian pattern of modernisation.

Romanian Fascist ideology was formulated primarily as a critique against two elements of the Romanian interwar political and socio-economic context: the Liberal political project and its institutions, and the alleged threats stemming from the Jews and communists to Romanian society. In spite of Romanian Fascisms' drawing predominantly on internal critical discursive traditions (nationalism, peasantism, Junimist 'critical thought', cf. Volovici 1991; Hitchins 1995), its overall political programme reflected many of the main concerns of German national socialism, Italian fascism, and other European fascisms. The Iron Guard as well as the intellectual movement promulgated a profound contempt for the formal-rational, bureaucratic logic, and parliamentarism or 'institutionalised conflict' of liberal, bourgeois society and rejected any elevation of the atomistic individual to the position of primary unit of society. Romanian Fascists paralleled their counterparts in Western Europe in their proposal for the creation of a State-as-One that reflected the People-as-One (cf. Lefort 1986), thereby eradicating the internal divisions of class society. As in German national-socialism, the Romanian Iron Guard singled out the Jew as the external Other, the embodiment of all the vices of civilisation. From 1933 onwards, the experiences of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy turned into more explicit 'reference societies' while intellectuals became more open in their support for fascism.

In the Romanian interwar context, fascism constituted not merely a systemic critique on the artificial, emulated, and derived liberal structures, but it also provided, even if imprecisely perceived, a vision of an alternative modern order to be realised by a revolutionary reconstruction of existing society. The alternative order explicitly incorporated notions of popular sovereignty (in which the people was equated with the nation and abstracted from any individual volition), national emancipation (not in institutionalist, constitutional terms as in liberalism, but through a cultural-spiritual regeneration), and a new civilisation comprising a new man (both of which would substitute the thoroughly compromised homo economicus of liberalism but still referred to the Enlightenment ideals of the malleability of society and the perfectibility of man, cf. Eisenstadt 1999).

At the same time, many tenets of the Fascists clearly entailed non-modern or pre-modern features. The return to the 'organically developed' rural village community as an alternative to the artificial city, the denial of reason as an instrument of comprehending the world in favour of unreflective traditions and the mystical union of man with nature, the exemplary and messianistic role of the élite to the detriment of autonomous individual thought, all contained strong elements of the negation of human autonomy.

The proposed alternative resonated strongly in the interwar period, because it reconnected with visions that had been counterposed to liberalism from the 1860s onwards and which had promised the representation of the rural population, and seemed to offer a popular alternative to the restricted, elitarian nature of the Romanian Liberal state.

Romanian Fascism entailed a form of radicalist particularism, in that it only accepted native, traditional sources as input for the reconstruction of society. The alleged artificiality and incompatibility of liberal structures with the Romanian character was primarily an outcome of their foreign and derived nature. In this, however, the Romanian Fascists not merely sought discontinuity with the Liberal project of 1848, which was seen as an illegitimate rupture with the authentic Romanian past, but at the same time formulated a radical response to the national question, equally significant in the Liberal project. Romanian Fascism continued the national quest for emancipation, initiated by the Liberals, but moved from a predominantly institutional-constitutional and economic plane to the level of cultural independence. In this way, the Fascists not only formulated an alternative to liberalism, but even more continued the emphasis on the liberation of the Romanian collective by means of a programme of modernisation which explicitly parted from essential Romanian characteristics. The substantive specificity of Romanian Fascism was constituted by a fusion of Eastern Orthodox religion and traditionalist, communal ruralism as the main component of Romanian collective identity (Hitchins 1995). It is significant that religion in this equation seemed not refer to the subjugation of a societal order to transcendental and other-wordly norms (which would be non-modern in its denial of human autonomy), but rather understood religion as the main component of national identity and thus as a marker of membership, a boundary-creating mechanism, and the primary substantive objective

around which to build a new state. In addition, to Orthodox religion characteristics were contributed that distinguished it sharply from Western religion and culture (collectivism and a contemplative nature). Fascism could thus also be understood as a radicalised project for national emancipation rather than merely a reactionary call for the return to the past.

Even though Romanian Fascism proposed an alternative model of modern society, transcending the differentiation and artificial structures of liberal society and offering a more complete integration of the Romanian nation as well as a more meaningful independence and form of collective autonomy, the alternative offered should be understood as only a partial or 'fragmented' form of modernisation. The primacy of political and cultural elements in the project led to the negligence of socio-economic matters. In this sense, the Fascist project lacked any developmentalist strategy and hardly had any response to the question of economic modernisation, apart from an emphasis on asceticism, sacrifice and anti-materialism. Similarly, Codreanu's conviction that 'the country is going to ruins for the lack of men, not for the lack of programs' (1973: 244) indicated the Iron Guard's predisposition for deeds rather than elaborated political programmes. This primacy of action however meant that the Fascists never elaborated detailed programmes for the institutionalisation of the Fascist project and could not offer a coherent and viable alternative order in strategic-institutionalist terms. Its status remained one of a movement rather than a governing party, further attested by the disorder that characterised its four month-rule at the end of 1939. The Romanian Fascists thus never really had to confront their ideas with the reality of constructing a new order. In this sense, the ultimate significance of the Fascist project lay in the profound influence it had on interwar politics and on the demise of the Liberal project, and, more importantly, in its reinforcement of a collectivist interpretation of modernity and in the radicalised imaginary it created of an independent, authentic Romanian nation.

The other main rival of the liberal project of modernity in the twentieth century was without doubt communism. Whether communism has been considered as the 'epitome of modernity' or as a 'failed modernity' (Feher et al. 1983; Janos 1991; Sztompka 1993; cf. Ray 1996; 1997), most theoretical considerations that acknowledge modern aspects

of communism have focused on its continuity with the Enlightenment ideas of rationalisation and mastery of nature in the form of a radical emphasis on the maximisation of resources and a far-reaching bureaucratisation of society (in particular of the economy). Thus, communism has been often perceived as a pathological or deviational interpretation of Western capitalism or as a variation of modernity understood in a particularly technocratic way (von Beyme 1994: 45). Although I do not deny this rationalist, developmentalist dimension to communism, I have suggested that communism has other significant modern aspects, the consideration of which widens the analysis and helps to understand communism as a specific project of modernisation rather than as a distorted interpretation of Western modernity.

Analysing communism as an alternative understanding and project of modernisation brings to the fore various aspects that go beyond its characterisation as merely an attempt to 'catch up' with the West (although communism entailed also that), while it encourages to consider aspects that are normally neglected by understandings of communism as a 'failed modernity' which see its contemporary heritage only in a negative way (as a 'fake modernity', Sztompka 1993). To a significant extent, communism entailed a radical critique of the archetypal institutions of Western modernity, i.e., capitalism, democracy, and the nation-state.

In other words, communism challenged the Western model for its 'non-completion or perversion of the original vision of modernity' (Eisenstadt 1999: 109). Capitalism was criticised for its disintegrating effects on society, its subordination and alienation of human beings, and its unrestrained pursuit of materialist objectives (the primacy of the economy), whereas democracy was seen as the mere extension of the rule of the dominant class and as capable of guaranteeing only formal liberties, without therefore realising a radical and complete form of freedom for all members of society. The alternative proposal of modern society made in communism was a proposal for the supersession of the complications of modern, Western society; in this sense, it can be understood as a different interpretation of modernity. The transcendence of Western society was proposed in a number of ways: by the substitution of fully rational planning for the anarchic and disintegrating effects of the market economy; by the re-appropriation of the economy by the collective (thereby eliminating class antagonisms); by the replacement of individual rationalities by a 'social rationality', putting the

collective before particular interests (Bauman 2001: 262-64); by the reunification of the people in a singular entity; and by the representation and guidance of the singular entity and its singular will by the party-state.

The communist model emerged from a systemic critique on Western liberalism and proposed an alternative and revolutionary way to construct modern society, to transform man and society, and to bring about a collective form of emancipation (cf. Eisenstadt 1999). The most conspicuously modern aspect was constituted by communism's claim to construct a 'carefully designed, rationally managed, and thoroughly industrialized' society (Bauman 2001: 61). The emphasis on accelerated and comprehensive industrialisation by means of central planning of an allegedly superior kind of rationalism was one of the most significant ways of realising collective autonomy. But it was not the only one. The communist project equally emphasised collective well-being and liberation to the detriment of individual interests, therefore claiming to realise a more comprehensive kind of freedom than possible in liberal modernity. Communism thus proposed a way of societal integration and unity as an answer to the destruction of social bonds by modernity (Arnason 1998: 161). Furthermore, the communist party-state was deemed a more direct and full expression of popular sovereignty than possible in Western pluralist democracy. The construction of a 'patronage state' (Bauman 2001: 58-60) which realised a positive, collective kind of freedom by means of strict control and mobilisation of society for the common good was the institutional expression of this.

I have argued (following Shoup 1962) that in the case of the East European satellite states communism was imposed by the Soviet Union, but that the dynamics of the Stalinist model ('socialism in one country') made subsequent retrieval of local autonomy and therefore the re-emergence of local traditions a possible, though not an inevitable development. In addition, I have pointed to the 'elective affinity' of the Stalinist model with local aspirations, which made the emulation of Soviet communism not merely a one-way 'transfer of institutions' but provided local élites with a model which could substitute supposedly failed attempts at mimeting Western democracy and capitalism and forcefully redirect these countries on a course of modernisation. Most significantly in the phase of de-Stalinisation the East European countries could (within

certain limits) formulate an alternative approach towards communism and attempt to construct a locally distinct form of communism, more suited to local traditions.

The Romanian local pattern consisted of a perseverance in a Stalinist approach towards the construction of socialism, legitimised by and embedded in a form of nationalist particularism. Rather than following bloc-wide trends of de-Stalinisation, limited openness and differentiation, and experimenting with reform socialism, the Romanian pathway that eventually crystallised re-emphasised a hypercentralised and dedifferentiating approach, controlled by a singular, ever smaller core élite entrenched in the party-state. I have argued that the Romanian interpretation of national Communism combined the emancipatory components of the overall communist model (the eradication of material scarcity, the liberation and unity of the collective) with the unifying and integrating aspects of local traditions of radical nationalism. In Romanian Communism, the strong emphasis on collective emancipation was maintained, while perceived not only in terms of a transcendence of the complications of Western modernity, but also in terms of the emancipation of the nation and the preservation of its traditions. The latter provided the means for the legitimation of a nationalist course of enduring Stalinism in a moment of bloc-wide pressure for fundamental change (de-Stalinisation) (Jowitt 1971; Shafir 1985). National Communism went beyond the pure instrumental usage of nationalism and isolationism in that it reintroduced a substantive notion of particularism/traditionalism. The reactivation of a tradition of indigenism meant that the Communist project was more and more founded on nativist elements. In this sense, emancipation was allegedly not only realised through the outrunning of the Western model, but even more so through a reconciliation with local traditions, which presupposed a more profound, radical, and authentic form of emancipation than was possible in the original Marxist-Leninist model.

The distinct features of Romanian national Communism consisted of the decisive pursuit of negative collective liberty, i.e., the right to self-determine the national pathway without the sustenance of interference from the outside, blended with the pursuit of collective positive liberty. The latter consisted of two components: 'full social *and* national liberation'. The first entailed the belief in socialist emancipation through the rationalisation of society by means of centrally planned industrialisation, based on the 'scientific' insights of Marxism-Leninism and through a 'dictatorship over needs'.

The second component consisted of particularist nationalism, which promulgated the superior aspects of the homogenous nation based on the traditions of the Romanian 'Daco-Roman' nation. The 'historical mission of the defence of the national interest' and the autonomous pursuit of the 'national will' were amalgamated with the continuous rationalisation of society through 'socialist industrialisation'. Both components could be invoked for the comprehensive mobilisation of the entire population for the dual objectives of social and national emancipation.

In terms of political practice, the Romanian Communists emphasised from the early 1960s onwards the indispensable right to national self-determination of socialist states, which externally entailed the call for formal 'constitutional independence' and internally allowed for the restructuring of the state around the 'national interest'. The pursuit of national sovereignty meant the redirection of socialist industrialisation to purely national objectives, i.e., the comprehensive modernisation of Romania and the steady improvement of its political, socio-economic and cultural autonomy. In structural-institutional terms, the ideological shift from internationalism to particularist nationalism permitted the Communist leadership to insulate Romanian Communism from reformist tendencies in the wider communist bloc, to stave off emerging pluralism in both the technocratic and humanist intellectual fields, and to continue a totalitarian, essentially Stalinist project. Political power remained concentrated in an ever smaller élite around Ceauşescu (while preventing the emergence of autonomous nuclei both inside and outside the party), whereas the state retained the character of a paternalist or 'patronage' state whose control and guidance were reinforced by both a singular, dogmatic reading of Marxism-Leninism-cum-nationalism and the singularity of the power centre. In economic terms, the original Stalinist interpretation of economic industrialisation through the one-sided stimulation of heavy industry and extensive growth to the detriment of both the consumer industry and agriculture was retained, while economic planning stemming from the singular centre remained imperative. Though during the Ceauşescu years the ultimate objective of industrialisation formally changed from socialism to a 'multilaterally developed socialist society', the basic commitment to the radical transformation of the country into a comprehensively industrialised state remained unaltered.

The collapse of the communist systems in 1989 has been predominantly interpreted as evidence of the viability and singularity of Western modernity. The Soviet model is equated with a 'failed modernity' whose premises and heritage are understood as dysfunctional and impediments in the construction of an authentically modern society (cf. Arnason 2000a; Bönker *et al.* 2002). The singular reading of modernity comprises the assumption of an inevitable rapprochement or convergence of the former communist countries towards a Western standard, translated in the institutional constellation of a democratic market economy. The emphasis is therefore not on possible variations and divergence of the former communist countries in their new projects of modernisation, but rather on their ability to reproduce the Western model in their local context. Instead of taking an interpretive and non-normative approach towards (conflicting) projects of modernisation that have been emerging in post-communist Eastern Europe - contrasting different visions of modernity rather than counterposing 'modern' visions with the remnants of 'traditional', communist ones - modernist approaches have been mostly engaged in trying to explain the non-conformation of post-communist realities with assumptions of convergence towards a Western model.

Critique on the modernist approach has taken issue with the uni-linearity, teleology, and normativeness of mainstream 'transitology' (Bönker *et al.* 2002; Eyal *et al.* 1998; Stark and Bruszt 1998), but has not yet sufficiently moved away from an essentially singular reading of modernity. The assumption that a superior (and therefore singular) model exists seems still to be (often implicitly) present in approaches that argue for variety and divergence (see chapter 2). My suggestion for one possible way leading away from modernist argumentation is based on a reading of modernity as possibly comprising a variety of understandings of its meaning (chapter 3).

The case of post-communist Romania seen from this perspective is indeed exemplary. The politics of transformation in Romania were dominated in the 1990s by two different – historically informed - understandings of modernisation (in the post-communist context referred to as transition). The two dominant traditions of dealing with modernity in the Romanian context – particularism and Westernism – constituted the primary ingredients in a polarised political landscape in which post-communists (building on a particularist understanding) were pitted against a coalition of anti-communists (building on the tradition of Europeanism) (cf. Pavel and Huiu 2003).

Conflict over the direction and substance of transformation was grounded in different, conflictive interpretations of the meaning of modernisation in the Romanian post-communist context. These interpretations themselves were constructions that emerged out of the confrontation between historically formed, local traditions of thought and contemporary transnational discursive paradigms (neoliberalism and European integration). The post-communists, who dominated the political landscape in the first half of the 1990s, avoided a systemic critique of communism while restricting their criticism of the immediate past to a political critique of Ceaușescuism. As the post-communists understood the political crisis to be largely a crisis of political authority, they did therefore not see the need for a complete rupture with the past. This meant that the post-communists had no elective affinity with the neoliberal paradigm whatsoever, as neoliberalism in the context of the post-communist transformations entailed a radical anti-communism as its main tenets were the radical opposite of what (post-)communism stood for (the 'patronage' state, collectivism, positive freedom and substantive rationality).

The particular discursive legacy of Romanian national Communism was recreated in two ways. First, by emphasising the need for social cohesion and state intervention in the economy the etatist, paternalist legacy of communism was reproduced. Secondly, by underlining an alternative from the transnational paradigms in the form of a Romanian third way, and unrestrained national sovereignty and independence, the legacy of national particularism was re-articulated. In order to legitimise its rejection of Western models and to prevent a powerful oppositional discourse from arising, the post-communists formulated a local alternative model, based on the notions of 'original democracy', 'national consensus', and the 'social state' and 'social market economy', all notions promulgated against the anti-communist opposition and transnational discursive paradigms.

During the 1990s, partly under influence of the critique of the opposition as well as from international actors, the post-communists modified their isolationist, particularist position by incorporating notions of the oppositional discourse (itself strongly influenced by the transnational paradigms), which articulated more radical change (regarding the nature of the state and international integration). The incorporation of these notions led, however, not to a radical departure from the earlier interpretation of

modernisation of the post-communists, but to the rather successful crystallisation of a discourse of 'social-democracy' which formed a syncretic composition of both the earlier particularist discourse and elements of universalism and reformism. The post-communists were therefore capable of legitimating their position by reference to local traditions (nationalism, uniqueness, as well as social solidarity) and to the reformism as promulgated by international institutions as well as the anti-communist forces. In political-strategic terms, the post-communists institutionalised the undivided 'national unitary state' (in service of the ethnic majority and against demands of the Hungarian national minority for regional autonomy), national consensus around the 'national objective of the modernisation and development of Romania' (showing intolerance towards political pluralism), and state paternalism, as the central state continued to be the guarantor of national unity and social cohesion.

It was the anti-communist opposition – relatively disorganised in the early 1990s but becoming an increasingly important political force from 1992 onwards – that widely adopted the transnational discursive paradigms. The political discourse of the anti-communists consisted of an unyielding critique on communism in both its pre-and post-1989 manifestations and the adoption of the major tenets of neoliberalism. It articulated a systemic critique of communism as not merely an aberration in its excessive form of Ceauşescuism but as an inherently non-viable and oppressive system. The anti-communist programme promulgated the need for legal-based negative, individual liberty, the strong reduction of the size and functions of the state in favour of civil society and economic actors, the need for a legally circumscribed state rather than a paternalist one, and the primacy of the economy in solving societal problems. In addition, the coalition strongly supported a 'return to Europe' and international integration as means to a radical transformation of Romanian society. The unbridled hostility to leftism of the majority of the self-proclaimed democratic coalition, its critique of the state as inherently bureaucratic and 'totalitarian', and the re-evaluation of the individual as the constitutive element of society coincided with the transnationally dominant neoliberal programme for the restructuring of the state. On the one hand, the emphasis on liberal individualism constituted a profound rupture with the collectivisms of the past. On the other, the anti-communist coalition consisted of re-established historical parties that claimed continuity with their interwar predecessors and their

democratic, liberal and Europeanist programmes. In this reading of the Romanian past, communism was an aberration and the return to democracy and capitalism was deemed a re-affirmation of authentically modern trends of Europeanisation and democratisation in Romania.

Despite the actively asserted paradigm of neoliberalism by international institutions, experts, and social scientists (its impact is assessed in a somewhat exaggerated way by, e.g., Burawoy 1992; Gowan 1995), and within Romania by the anti-communist coalition, the post-communists were able to pursue for a prolonged period of time a self-proclaimed alternative to both Western models and the discredited communist system. This was not only due to the absence of organised dissenting forces during national Communism and their complicated (re-)grouping after 1989, but more importantly because of the pronounced discourse of order, stability, and social cohesion in times of profound change and insecurity. The perseverance of the post-communists should then primarily be explained from, first, their capacity to institutionalise significant components of their programme (setting the 'ground rules' of society in the constitution, controlling the privatisation process and general socio-economic reforms), and, second, their ability to 'crowd out' the discursive arena both by control over the means of mass communication and through the articulation of a discourse which built on the strongly embedded notions of collectivism, particularism, and ethno-cultural integration. This discourse successfully discredited the oppositional discourse and transnationally dominant ideas of reform, as liberalism and Europeanism had been thoroughly undermined during both communist and pre-communist times and were easily equated with foreign domination and loss of independence.

The electoral victory of the anti-communist coalition in November 1996 has been widely interpreted as the return of Romania to an authentic path of modernisation, based on the Western understandings of democracy and capitalist society. The anti-communist coalition in this reading performed the role of a 'functional élite'. Nevertheless, the electoral victory of the anti-communist coalition can hardly be read as a decisive rupture with past in terms of a widely shared acceptance of its systemic criticism; rather, the economic mismanagement and corruption identified with the post-communists were the immediate causes of their (temporary) retreat. So, where the programme of the anti-

communist coalition itself constituted a historically unprecedented rupture with the dominant pattern of modernisation in Romania based on collective autonomy, integral nationalism, and etatism, the anti-communists were not able to embed their emulationist/universalist discourse sufficiently in the local discursive context to create a convincing crisis narration of the notions of collective autonomy, positive freedom, ethno-cultural integration and social cohesion. In addition, the coalition itself from time to time promulgated integral nationalism in tension with professed individualism and legal-rationalism. I argue that the governing period of the anti-communist coalition can be read as a failure to produce a discursive break with the dominant pattern of modernisation and to institutionalise the main tenets of its alternative modernisation programme. On the normative level, the anti-communists failed to promulgate a discourse that was sufficiently embedded/legitimated in the Romanian context. Its neoliberal, emulationist, individualist discourse ran counter to historically firmly embedded collectivist, nationalist perceptions (in terms of discursive traditions as well as political and economic institutions). The individualist, legal-rational, and universalist components were open to critiques of a political nature – as detrimental to the national interest – as well as of a social nature – as resulting in social polarisation and disintegration.

On the level of institutional discourse, institutionalisation and political practice, the most vulnerable element of the anti-communist programme of modernisation was its relation to collective autonomy/independence and national integration. Both its reference to the need for a civic conception of nationhood and citizenship and for unmediated integration into Euro-Atlantic integration seemed to imply a loss of sovereignty, autonomy, and social cohesion. The anti-communists failed moreover to realise a positive consensus in terms of a political project (complementing its negative consensus on the totalitarian nature of post-communism). Ambiguity towards legal-rationalism and individualism as well as discontent on the scope and pace of socio-economic reforms undermined the coherence of its programme. The outcome of this lack of a positive consensus was an only very limited institutionalisation of its primary tenets (no comprehensive reform of political institutions, no decisive advance towards Euro-Atlantic integration, and an only limited reform of socio-economic institutions).

Some theoretical considerations

The Romanian experience with modernity indicates that a singular, unitary reading of modernity as a phenomenon that ultimately leads to the convergence and unification of modern societies (as currently indicated by the term globalisation) is unsustainable. The emergence and diffusion of Western modernity should be understood as having resulted in a range of reactions and alternatives to the Western main pattern, thereby creating variations of the Western pattern as well as distinct alternatives. In this sense, the experience of 'later modernising societies' can better be understood as producing varieties of modernity rather than as aberrations or deviations from a main pattern. The Romanian case shows a variation of the Western pattern in that it demonstrates its own distinct features (statism, integral nationalism) which are partially the result of the structural impact of alternative forms of modernity on the Romanian experience (in particular, fascism and communism). In themselves these distinct features do not give shape to a sustained alternative pattern, but they do constitute a distinct legacy with significant consequences for the present.

Modernity is not a monolithic whole, which prescribes a singular uni-linear course from the traditional *Gemeinschaft* to the modern *Gesellschaft*. Rather, the 'original', Western pattern evoked reactions from 'later modernising societies', whose élites adopted some of the main tenets of Western modernity but adapted these tenets to local circumstances thereby constructing different visions. The Western pattern has thus functioned as a main 'reference point' without exhausting the experiences of other societies. A key role in the production of different understandings of modernity has been played by political and cultural élites (cf. Eisenstadt 1992; Kaya 2004). If modernity can have different connotations in particular contexts, an analytical search for those modernising agents that exhibit the Western mind-set forecloses the identification of agents with alternative programmes. The analysis is then restricted to the identification of 'functional élites', 'change agents', or 'interactionist-individualist élites' (Kaminski and Kurczewska 1995), i.e., those agents that portray the right dynamic and rational attitude which is necessary for a decisive rupture with the old system and who are capable of designing a

programme of modernisation which coincides with Western self-understandings of modernity.[266]

As the impact of programmes of modernity takes place in different historical-societal contexts, these programmes interact with different settings of conflict, and can be adopted by various political and cultural élites. Therefore, a plurality of modernising agents has to be acknowledged (cf. Kaya 2004: 4). For instance, rather than being sustained by an emerging bourgeoisie (one of the most significant modernising actors in Western Europe), the Liberal nationalist project in nineteenth-century Romania was initiated by parts of the gentry who not only engaged in a thorough reconstruction of the societal order, but who also produced a significantly different interpretation of modernisation by primary pursuing the objectives of collective self-determination and unification of the Romanian nation. The analysis of modernisation needs not to be concerned with the identification of substitutive 'functional élites' but rather shift its focus to a plurality of (constellations of) actors, and conflicts and interactions over the meaning of modernisation in particular societies. In principle, various élites and their programmes should be analysed as potentially harbouring projects of societal reconstruction, rather than relegating some projects to the status of conservatism whereas others are identified as dynamic and progressive.[267] Likewise, modernisation creates conflict in itself as any (re-)construction of the social order leads to the institutionalisation of particular values and to the suppression of others. Therefore, modernisation creates tensions between those that build the new order and those whose values and visions are not represented and who are (effectively or perceptively) excluded (cf. Eisenstadt 1978; Wagner 1994: 25). In this way, modernisation exacerbates tensions in society and can result over time in the emergence of counter-élites, which contest the existing order and promulgate an alternative project.

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[266] As Kaminski and Kurczweska argue: 'We find more of the interactionist-individualist type of élites in the Baltic states, where such traditions have survived from the interwar period, than in Bulgaria and Romania. This suggests that the first three societies will probably make faster progress in developing their democratic and market institutions than in the latter' (Kaminski and Kurczweska 1995: 150).

[267] Cf Stark and Bruszt: '[W]e should not be too quick or too confident in our a priori ability to distinguish strategies of survival from strategies of innovation' (Stark and Bruszt 1998: 7).

Next to a plurality of modernising agents, a multiplicity of programmes of modernisation should be considered. Although the dominance of the Western pattern of modernity should be acknowledged, its diffusion gave rise to reactions and alternative constructions of understanding modernity. Thus, although programmes of (political and economic) liberalism have constituted and been understood as the dominant vision of modernity, these programmes have evoked counter-visions that entailed different solutions to the questions of liberty and self-rule as raised by liberalism (in the most radical form in the programmes of fascism and communism, see the chapters 8 and 9). As the condition of modernity is founded on the notions of human autonomy and the malleability of society, any concrete, institutionalised solution for modern society is temporary and essentially contestable. Any programme of modernisation is based on multi-interpretable concepts (liberty, democracy, progress) which – due to their general and abstract nature – are open for different interpretations and thus to critique regarding their unfulfilled status.

This leads me to a final point, i.e., the multiplicity of institutional configurations that can underpin modern society. Multiple programmes of modernisation lead to multiple forms of institutions, in which key tenets of modernity are institutionalised in different ways. Thus, the configuration of democracy, the market economy, and the nation-state has constituted the main pattern of Western modernity,[268] but cannot be seen as exhausting the institutional patterns that can be imagined and realised. Different configurations have figured in alternative projects of modernisation (the most durable pattern has been constituted by the communist project).

In sum, Westernisation is a significant component of modernisation in later modernising societies, not as an offshoot of a master process of modernisation, but rather as one (contested) proposal among others. In pursuing projects of modernisation, actors can follow different rationalities (emulation or self-imitation; past- or future-oriented; totalising or pluralistic) and often seek to institutionalise very distinct sets of values and ideas. Rather than having the inevitable choice between the preservation of traditions, on the one hand, or the complete rupture with the traditional order, on the other,

[268] Another interpretation of the archetypal Western constellation is capitalism, industrialism and the nation-state, see Giddens 1990.

modernising élites can pursue the construction of variegated orders in which both rational-legal elements and substantive elements can be present. In later modernising societies, it is the intersection of external models, local, indigenous traditions, and the creativity of agency that results in 'varieties of modernity'.

Summary

The debate on the 'transitions' in Eastern Europe has been strongly informed by two assumptions: the singularity of Western modernity and the convergence of Eastern Europe towards it. By postulating convergence and equating modernisation with Westernisation, the greater part of intellectual activity has been rather unsusceptible to the supposition of possible diversity in the modernisation of Eastern Europe. Only recently, diversity (and therefore history) has been taken as an explicit point of departure. In this study, I will tie in with historicised approaches by starting from an approach of 'varieties of modernity'. I acknowledge thereby the possibility of different pathways to modernity as well as variety in understanding modernity itself.

Modernisation is understood here not as a *process* which leads to an ultimately integrated and unified modern society, but as (successive) political *projects* pursued by modernising agents who seek to reconstruct society on the basis of their specific understanding of modernity. This also means that conflict over the understanding of modernity is an immanent factor of modernisation and that institutionalised projects of modernisation are always open to critique. More specifically regarding modernisation in Eastern Europe (perhaps also relevant to other 'later modernising' societies), modernisation projects are for a significant part constructed under the influence of external ideas and models. Modernisation in these societies is not necessarily expressed in an indiscriminate emulation of external models, but takes the form of a selection of elements from external models in an encounter with locally accumulated experiences and understandings.

I apply this conception of modernisation to the case-study of a single - relatively under-researched - Eastern European country, Romania. I use a historical-sociological approach with an emphasis on a conceptual analysis of modernising discourses. The political-institutional part of my analysis of various projects of modernisation is concerned with the identification of major modernising agents (political and cultural élites) and the institutional patterns (political-legal institutions and socio-economic structures) created by these modernisers in the last two centuries. The analysis of

agency and institutional patterns is 'embedded' in the reconstruction of understandings of modernisation held by modernising agents.

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